■ News / A2

Narvasa testifies at Sandigan that GMA offered exile to Erap

■ Business / B1

Oil firms roll back prices by 75¢/liter effective yesterday

■ News / A2

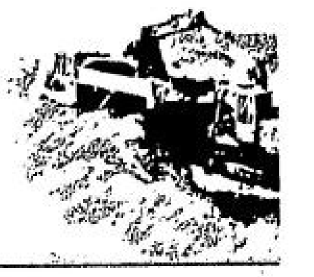
US affirms support for RP-MILF peace talks, says Romulo

■ Metro / A21

Mastermind in P130-M kidnap of Filipino-Chinese student arrested

■ Across / A17

Drop in quarry taxes blamed on Lapid exemptions



Hotbabes' big boss named GMA man for entertainment

BOLD YAN SIGURADO!

By Gil Cabacungan, Jr.

A YEAR after making available the Viva Hotbabes in her presidential campaign rallies, President Macapagal-Arroyo has created a new government post for

HOTBABES/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

'Some priests wined, dined by generous jueteng lords'

By Christian V. Esguerra

EVEN priests have been corrupted by "jueteng," a ranking Church official told the INQUIRER.

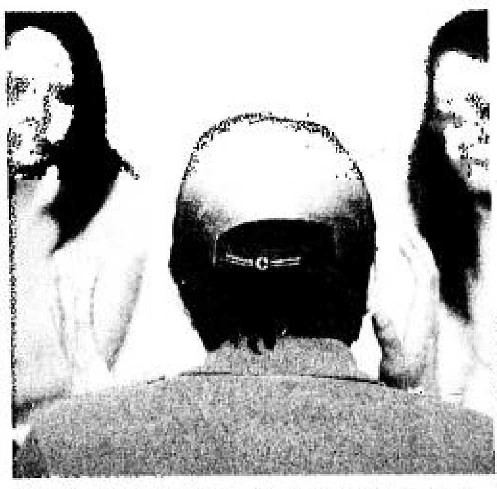
According to the Church official who declined to be identified, some priests wine and dine with known jueteng operators, accept contributions from them and tolerate the ille-

SOME/ A10

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Thursday, May 19, 2005 ★★ 46 pages 4 sections Vol. 20 No. 160 P18

3 'jueteng' men tag Mike A, son



JIM GUMO PUNZALAN

MYSTERY whistle-blower tells all including the names of the biggest beneficiaries.

Lacson: Witnesses to testify in Senate

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Norman Bordadora

FOUR "jueteng" operators will give what Sen. Panfilo Lacson has described as "very explosive testimony" at the Senate investigation on the operations of the illegal numbers game.

"It will open a can of worms," Lacson said of the "witnesses" whom he declined to name pending their appearance at the Senate inquiry. He said the witnesses would testify on people in "high places" who were on the take.

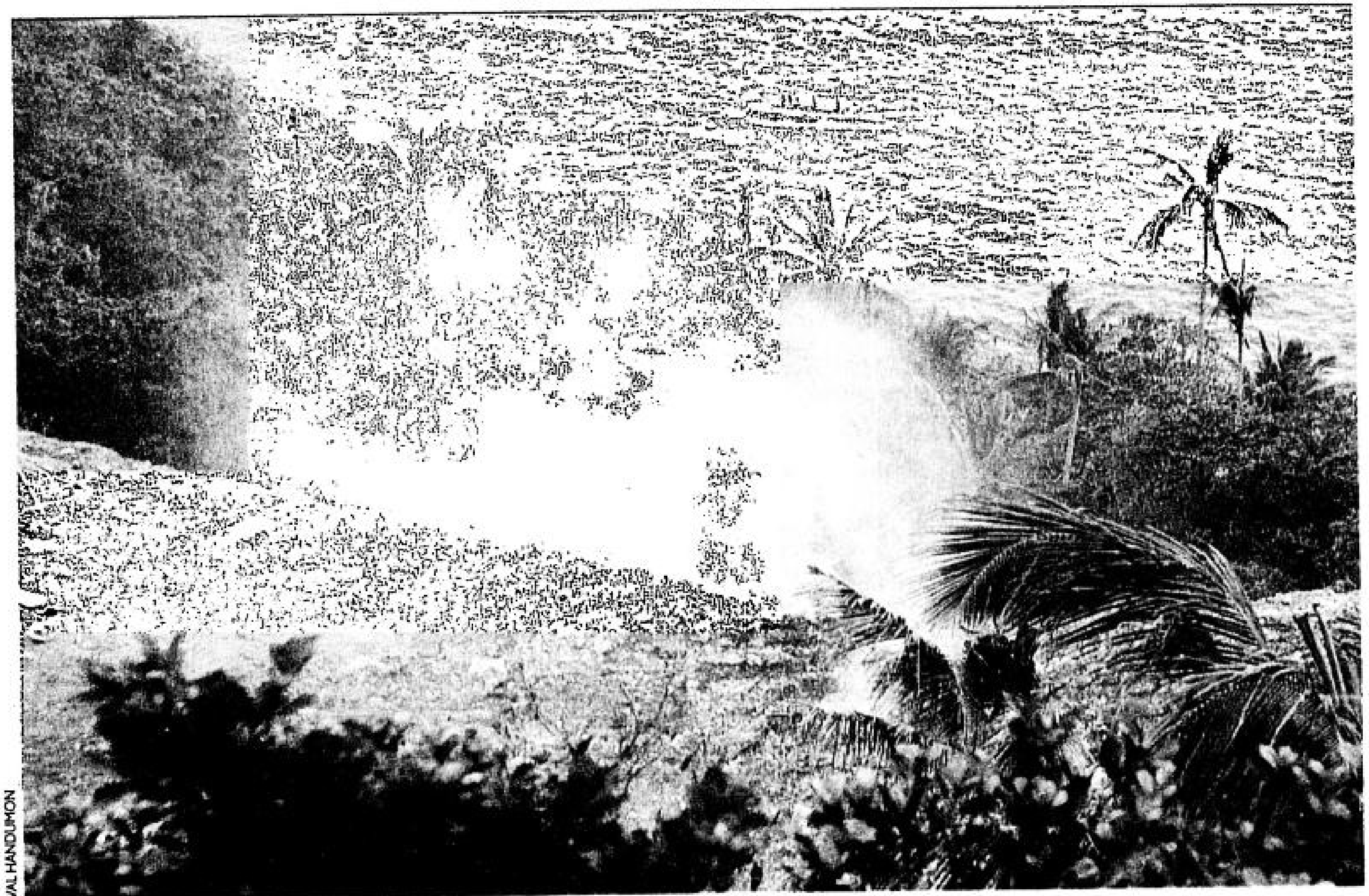
But the INQUIRER was able to speak with three persons—two supposed "bagmen" and a jueteng operator—who claimed to have given or collected protection money for President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, lawyer Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, and their elder son, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo. The interviews took place in a hotel in Manila. *(Denials of the Arroyos, other officials on Page A10.)*

The three have submitted affidavits to bolster their accusations and are preparing to testify at the joint inquiry of the Senate committees on games and on public order. There is a fourth witness, a woman.

A 46-year-old man from Legazpi City in Albay said he served as bagman for former presidential assistant on Bicol affairs Mario K. Espinosa, whom Mike Arroyo had allegedly given the "blessing" to collect money from jueteng lords in Bicol.

The bagman (or B1) told the INQUIRER that he started collecting

3 'JUETENG'/ A10



VAL HANDUMON

A MINI Smokey Mountain, 50-foot high, and counting, rises in Sitio Lapuz-Lapuz, Barangay Yapac, Boracay, Aklan, overlooking the powder-fine white sands of the famed tourist destination area. But tourists are not likely to chance upon the open dumpsite as it is still manageable to hide from public view—for now. Ironically, the garbage mound is set against a panoramic view idyllic as far as the eyes can see.

BORACAY'S DIRTY SECRET

The other side of the island paradise stinks

By Fe Zamora

BORACAY ISLAND—It's a secret that stinks.

Hidden from the eyes of tourists, Boracay's version of Smokey Mountain threatens to literally lay to waste this island paradise.

"We want to close it. We want to rehabilitate the area, but in the meantime, we have no alternative but to use it as a dump," Malay Mayor Ceciron Cawaling told the INQUIRER.

Located in Sitio Lapuz-lapuz, Barangay Yapac, the open dump sits below the Mt. Luho view deck, which offers a panoramic view of the island and its environs, including Carabao Island and the Tablas Strait.

The mound of garbage has formed a precipitous 50-foot cliff that, under strong rains, could collapse onto the world-famous white sand and into the sea.

"We get all the blame for the problems here. But Boracay is an international tourist destination. We should all help to preserve it," Cawaling said in a phone interview.

The dump has been in use since the 1990s, Cawaling said. It was temporarily closed in February, but has since been reopened for lack of a waste disposal system.

The planned alternative was a "composting plant" to be set up near the dump,

THE OTHER SIDE/ A9

Obando kids to learn fertility rites song, dance

By Carmela Reyes
PDI Central Luzon Desk

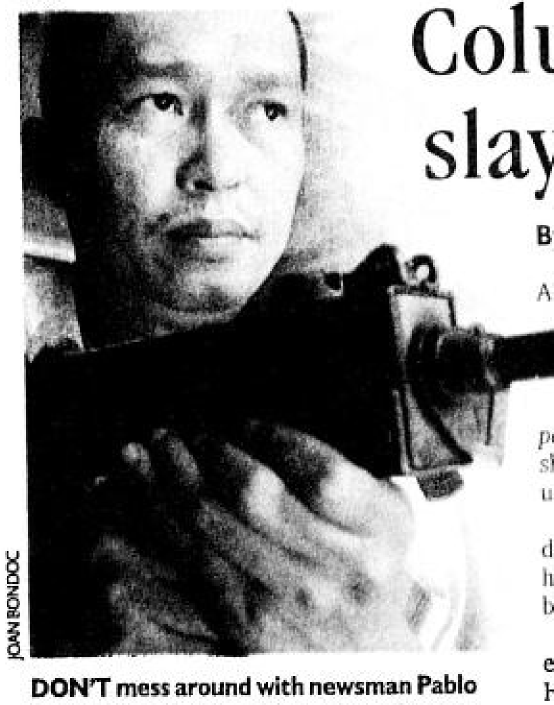
OBANDO, Bulacan—Expect school children in this coastal town to know by heart the lyrics and traditional dance steps accompanying the "Sta. Clara Pinong Pino," a popular ditty sung during the town's famous fertility rites.

Mayor Zoilito Santiago said that starting June, the song and its dance steps would be a required lesson for public and private school students in Obando (pop: 58,245 as of 2002) to make them aware of their town's unique fertility rites held yearly on May 17-19.

Santiago said the local government launched the project during the three-day celebration of the feasts of Sta. Clara, the patron saint of childless women, and the Nuestra Señora de Salambao and San Pascual Baylon, patron saints of fishermen, this week.

Tourists and childless couples

OBANDO/ A9



JOAN BONDOC

DON'T mess around with newsman Pablo Hernandez of Bulgar. He packs an Ingram.

Columnist survives slay try: I shot first

By Nancy C. Carvajal and Luige A. del Puerto

ARMED with an Ingram machine pistol, a tabloid columnist traded shots with two unidentified men before dawn yesterday in Valenzuela City in the latest of a rash of attacks against journalists.

"*Bago sila nakaporma, nauna na akong magpaputok* (Before the attackers could position themselves, I shot first)," Pablo Hernandez, who writes a regular column "Prangkahan" for Bulgar, told the INQUIRER.

It was the second attempt on the life of Hernandez, who described himself as a "hard-hitting journalist." On Feb. 8, he survived a knife attack by a confessed hired killer at a billiards hall in Quezon City.

It was not clear if the latest attack was related to the earlier incident or to his job as a tabloid columnist, but Hernandez said he strongly suspected that police officers

COLUMNIST/ A8

PRESIDENTIAL TEMPER

What's getting on the presidential nerves during the 26th national conference of employers on Wednesday? Only Vice President Noli de Castro and Employers Confederation of the Philippines Chair Miguel Varela can tell for sure.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Budget deficit to drop to ₱151B

By Michelle V. Remo

AN INTER-AGENCY group foresees this year's national budget deficit to drop to P151.25 billion—16 percent below the official target—as the expansion of the value-added tax (VAT) boosts the government's coffers.

Assistant Finance Secretary Gil Beltran yesterday told reporters that the Development Budget Coordinating Committee (DBCC), an inter-agency group tasked with reviewing the government's economic forecasts, had estimated the fiscal shortfall to reach P151.25 billion this year following last week's approval by Congress of a bill expanding the VAT.

The government is targeting a budget deficit this year of P180 billion, or 3.4 percent of gross domestic product, down from P187 billion, or 3.9 percent of GDP, in 2004.

"We call it an emerging scenario . . . (and) the emerging scenario is at P151.25 billion," Beltran said after attending the DBCC meeting at the

BUDGET/ A6

Second FRONT PAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening. SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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GMA offered exile to Erap, says Narvasa

By Nelson F. Flores

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo had tried to lure deposed President Joseph Estrada to go into voluntary exile abroad shortly after he was ousted from power in 2001 in exchange for immunity from criminal charges, former Chief Justice Andres Narvasa Sr. said yesterday.

In his testimony before the Sandiganbayan's Special Division, Narvasa said that Ms Arroyo through former Justice Secretary Hernani Perez tried but failed to convince Estrada to accept the offer during a meeting on Feb. 7, 2001 at the residence of Ambassador Manuel Collantes in Forbes Park, Makati City.

"Masyado nila akong iniipit. Bahala sila, maglalaban na lang kami (They are putting too much pressure on me. It is up to them, we will just fight)," Narvasa quoted the former president as saying after he met with Perez.

Narvasa, one of Estrada's defense counsel during his impeachment trial, revealed that prior to the Feb. 7 meeting, Ernest Escaler, a known confidant of Perez, met with him on the instruction of Ms Arroyo. During that meeting at the Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel, Ms Arroyo and Perez talked to him through Escaler's cellular phone, he said.

Avoid humiliation

On Jan. 26, Narvasa said he met Perez at the McArthur Suite of the Manila Hotel where he was first informed of the proposal for Estrada to go into voluntary exile to avoid humiliation. In exchange, Estrada was to submit a letter of resignation and a medical certificate attesting to his need for medical attention.

According to Narvasa, Estrada, after being informed of the proposal, immediately rejected it.

Narvasa said another meeting was held at Escaler's condominium unit in Rockwell, Makati City. At that meeting, he said, Perez was more specific and pointed out to the urgency of Estrada going into exile since "his (Estrada) presence is a disruptive factor in the peace and order situation."

Perez assured that no witness would testify against Estrada and that no charges would be filed against him.

Perez also bared two exit options for Estrada—either through the front or back door. Under the former, Estrada would submit the resignation letter and medical certificates in exchange for government assistance.

On the other hand, under the second option, Estrada won't be required to submit anything but will have to go out of the country through the back door, Narvasa said.

According to Narvasa, Perez also said that if Estrada opted for the latter, there would be no hold-departure order against him, his passport and that of Ms Loi Ejercito would be renewed, they would be given travel assistance to their country of choice and allowed to take their assets out of the country.

After that meeting, another meeting was set on Feb. 5, also at Escaler's condominium unit, Narvasa said.

But Perez did not show up and instead talked to him over the phone and was furious that Estrada's other lawyers filed a motion before the Supreme Court questioning the legality of the Arroyo administration and the power of the government to put the former president on trial.

Perez then said that all offers were off but agreed to meet with Estrada on Feb. 7, Narvasa said.

'Politically motivated'

Defense lawyer Jose Flaminiano said Narvasa's testimony only proved that the charges against Estrada were "politically motivated." He argued that if his client is guilty of the charges against him, then why would Ms Arroyo try to make a deal.

"Estrada could have just left to avoid humiliation but he did not," Flamiano stressed.

However, Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said Narvasa's testimony is irrelevant to the charges against Estrada.

In reaction to Narvasa's testimony, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he would take it with a grain of salt.

"A defense team can always concoct a story by saying this is what happened. It's not very difficult to concoct stories," Gonzalez said in a briefing in Malacañang. "I would like to say to take it with a grain of salt."

Gonzalez, who was part of the prosecution team in the Estrada impeachment trial, also raised doubts on Narvasa's independence since he was a former defense lawyer of Estrada in the impeachment trial. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

BERT MEETS CONDI. Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo shakes hands with US State Secretary Condoleeza Rice prior to their meeting Tuesday in Washington. REUTERS

US affirms support for talks in South

WASHINGTON—The United States reaffirmed support Tuesday for peace talks between the Philippine government and the country's main Muslim rebel group widely expected to be concluded this year, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice indicated that Washington was "encouraged by the progress being made" in talks between Manila and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Romulo told reporters after talks with the chief American diplomat here.

He "welcomed her commitment of continued support for peace and development" in southern Mindanao island, where the MILF has been fighting for a separate state for nearly three decades.

"We are hopeful that the peace process will come to a successful conclusion sometime this year," Romula said.

Predominantly Muslim Malaysia has been hosting peace talks between the Philippine government and the MILF, with both sides having predicted a positive outcome.

Romulo said he told Rice "that it's important that we get through with this peace process with the MILF," emphasizing that a ceasefire between Philippine troops and MILF had been holding well for nearly two years.

"Not only that, the MILF has been helping us run after those terrorists who are in their midst," he added.

The Philippines is bidding to sign a peace treaty with the MILF to deny Mindanao sanctuaries to foreign Islamic militant groups.

The United States has stationed troops in Mindanao to help train Filipino soldiers to go after suspected terrorists.

US ambassador to Manila Francis Ricciardone had alleged recently that there were sections in the MILF that provided sanctuary for foreign militants, including suspects in the 2002 Bali, Indonesia bombings that killed more than 200 people. *AFP*

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CA defers action on Mike Defensor

By TJ Burgonio

WITHOUT uttering a word, "oppositors" to Environment Secretary Michael Defensor's appointment scored a victory of sorts after the Commission on Appointments (CA) deferred his confirmation yesterday.

This means that oppositors to Defensor's designation, including bishops who failed to appear at last Tuesday's hearing of the CA committee on environment, will have more time to present their case against what they called anti-environment policies of the nominee.

At first, the CA approved the submission to the plenary of a report by the environment committee endorsing Defensor's nomination, but decided not to hold the plenary session and defer his confirmation.

CA member Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, however, threatened to invoke a provision in the CA rules to defer consideration of Defensor's appointment over the body's failure to hear the side of the bishops.

"We have to respect the CA process. What transpired today was part of the process, part of the rules," Defensor told reporters after the tense-filled caucus where he was grilled by his vocal critic, Sen. Jamby Madrigal.

Madrigal, who was given a chance to state her opposition, herself got a tongue-lashing from CA members Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and Rep. Clavel Martinez for insinuating that the CA was trying to "railroad" the opposition filed by the bishops.

After hearing Madrigal's opposition and Defensor's defense, the CA, meeting in a caucus, voted to approve a motion to submit the environment committee report on Defensor's appointment to the plenary.

Only Osmeña voted against the motion and vowed to invoke Section 20 of the CA rules at the plenary, which allows any member of the body to move for the suspension of action on any nomination.

The senator objected twice to moves to submit the report to the plenary and insisted that the body should first listen to the opposition of the bishops. "They are very respectable leaders," Osmeña said.

The bishops failed to appear at Tuesday's hearing because they received the notices on the same day.

Enrile and Sen. Manuel Roxas III said that "a majority" of the CA members decided to reset the plenary for next week in view of Osmeña's threat to invoke Section 20 of the CA rules on the floor.

Besides Madrigal, Catholic bishops Julio Labayen, Jose Manguiran, Ramon Villena and Deogracias Iñiguez, Bishop Ephraim Fajutagana of the Iglesia Independiente and Fr. Robert Reyes of Gomburza have opposed Defensor's nomination.

PLAYING COY, Sen. Jamby Madrigal looks away as Environment Secretary Mike Defensor enters the room during Commission on Appointment hearing on Defensor's appointment. Madrigal is the secretary's staunchest critic in the Senate. JESS YUSON

CHEd wants to peg tuition increases at inflation rate

PRIVATE colleges and universities are only allowed to increase tuition not higher than the current inflation rate of 8.4 percent, the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) said yesterday.

Acting CHEd Chair Carlito Puno said they would be issuing Memorandum Order 14 to spell out the policy on tuition hikes.

"What we are thinking of is putting the ceiling at par with the national inflation rate, which at present is 8.4 percent," Puno told a radio interview. "Any increase over 8.4 percent must be submitted to us for approval."

CHEd said the other day it had received petitions for an average 15-percent increase in school fees.

Last school year, CHEd, then headed by Bro. Rolando Dizon FSC, also said they would put a cap on hikes in tuition and miscellaneous fees based on the inflation rate. But the commission never did until Dizon resigned.

Puno said schools may increase their tuition above the inflation rate, but they have to justify this. CHEd will allow a higher than inflation rate increase on a "case by case basis," he said.

He cited Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila which had not increased tuition for the last three years. "Now they're filing for a 20-percent increase which we are more likely to grant because of the previous circumstance," Puno said.

"Some students might also request for an increase in athletic fees, especially if they want to become champions in college basketball tournaments."

Puno also revived the guidelines on tuition increase that CHEd was supposed to issue last school year. Puno said university officials need not consult parents and students if the tuition hike was less than or equal to the prevailing inflation rate.

President Macapagal-Arroyo the other day ordered state colleges and universities to suspend any tuition increase to show "sensitivity" to the difficulties of ordinary Filipinos.

CHEd said out of 1,342 private colleges and universities in the country, 205 or 17 percent had filed for tuition hikes this year.

In Metro Manila alone, 66 out of the 244 colleges and universities would adjust upward their school fees. The Asian Theological Seminary, a graduate school, had asked for the highest increase, from P600 to P1,500 per unit, or a 150-percent hike.

CHEd said the average tuition increase ranged from 13.14 percent in year 2000 to 11.37 percent in 2004. *Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

DepEd plans to send back students to private schools

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE DEPARTMENT of Education is putting back to private schools nearly 350,000 public high school students in an attempt to stem the tide of students from expensive private schools moving to tuition-free state schools.

Education Secretary Florencio Abad said yesterday they would subsidize public high school students so they could enroll in private high schools this June.

The subsidy, which is provided under the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education, would cost the government some P1.5 billion, Abad said in a news conference.

Each student would get a tuition subsidy of P4,000, he said.

Lack of government funds has made it difficult for the public school system to accommodate students.

Abad said they expected enrollment in public schools to grow by 4.7 percent this school year, as more and more parents were forced to transfer their children to public schools because of rising tuition cost.

As of last school year, there were about 5 million students in public high schools, and the DepEd said they expected the number to go up by at least 4.4 percent.

In the public elementary schools, the DepEd said they were looking at a 2-percent growth in enrollment from the present count of 13 million.

"By subsidizing students in private schools, the government is able to decongest public schools, some of which have to accommodate as many as 80 students per class," Abad said.

Abad said this way the government could "improve the quality of education services in the overcrowded public educational institutions."

Mayor denies link to killing of media man

By Margaux C. Ortiz

DINGALAN Mayor Jaime Ylarde, who has been linked to the killing of a community newspaper publisher in Aurora province, yesterday appeared at the National Bureau of Investigation to deny his involvement in last week's murder.

Accompanied by his wife Buena, Ylarde told reporters during a news conference that he did not know Starline Times Recorder publisher-editor Philip Agustin personally.

"*Paano iinit ulo ko sa kanya eh hindi ko siya kilala* (How could I be mad at him when I did not even know him)," Ylarde said, smiling calmly.

Ylarde added that he did not see or talk to Agustin even when he was a vice mayor of the small town in the Aurora province years ago.

One of the suspects in the killing, laborer Reynaldo Morete, had said in a press conference on Monday that his first cousin Nilo "Boyet" Morete had told him that Agustin must be killed because of the negative stories he had been writing about the mayor.

Ylarde, however, said that he knew Agustin had duped 200 families in Dingalan by selling non-existent lands.

"Agustin disappeared from the town after running for town mayor in 1992, resurfaced to sell the lands, then disappeared again," Ylarde said.

The Dingalan mayor also admitted that he knew Boyet because he worked for a Department of Public Works and Highways project.

"Boyet helped clean the roads for the DPWH," Ylarde said, adding that it was not true that Boyet and his accomplices were under his payroll.

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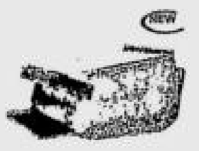

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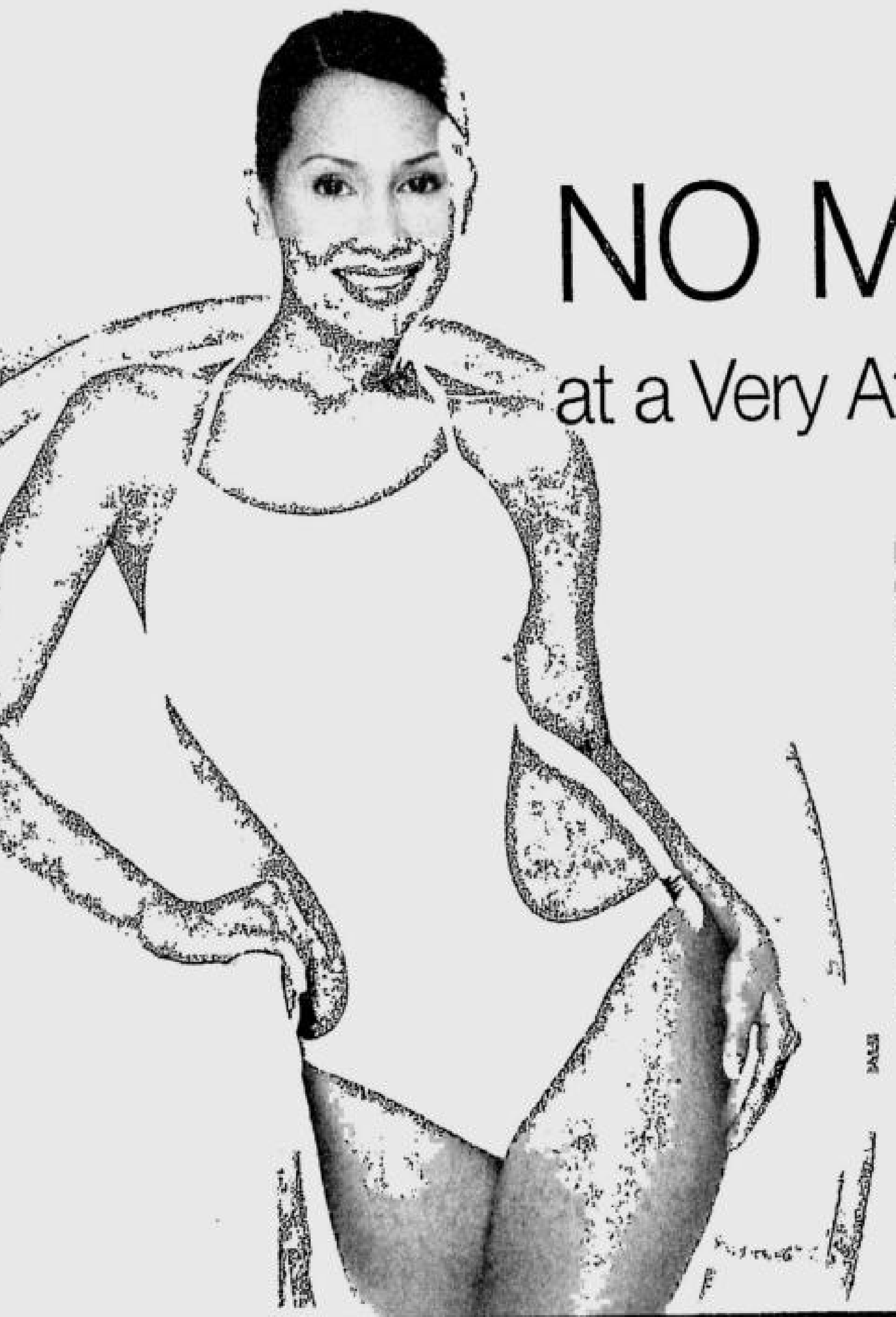

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DRUG PRICE BUSTERS
Fourteen of the 69 co-authors of House Bill 3830 proposing to regulate the alarming prices of medicines link arms to symbolize their unity and resolve in passing the measure during the recent press conference and signature launch at the Hotel Rembrandt. The congressmen, who vowed to collect 10 million signatures nationwide in support of the measure, are (from left) Assistant Majority Leader Del de Guzman (Marikina), Milagros Magsaysay (Zambales), Remedios Petilla (Leyte), Reylina Nicolas (Bulacan), Nanette Castelo-Daza (Quezon City), Renato Magtubo (Partido Manggagawa), Rolex Suplico (Iloilo), Deputy Speaker Raul del Mar (Cebu), Ferjenel Biron (Iloilo), Acmad Tomawis (ALIF), Tranquilino Carmona (Negros Occidental), Janette Garin (Iloilo), Eulogio Magsaysay (AVE) and Rodolfo Plaza (Agusan del Sur).

SEC discriminatory, says Pacific Plans

PACIFIC Plans Inc. yesterday described as discriminatory the opposition of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to the pre-need company's proposed rehabilitation plan before the Makati Regional Trial Court.

PPI legal counsel and spokesperson Jeanette C. Tecson, in a press statement, said PPI was ready to answer all charges leveled against it by the SEC with the court even as she stressed that the regulatory body was "obviously employing a discriminatory double-standard" in dealing with the problems of pre-need firms.

Tecson said that while an ad hoc committee of the SEC had proposed a swap of the traditional open-ended plans with fixed-value plans as among its recommendations to salvage the ailing College Assurance Plan (CAP), "the SEC is treating PPI differently."

"In contrast to its recommendations in the case of CAP, the SEC is now telling us that our contractual obligations must be respected and that not even the courts should unduly interfere with it," Tecson said. "This is a clear case of discrimination and double-standard," she added.

Tecson stressed that PPI did not misrepresent its financial status in its statements to the SEC, "neither did it resort to rehabilitation to evade the payment of its liabilities."

Describing the SEC allegations as "irresponsible and reckless," she said rehabilitation was not meant to defeat planholders' claims, but as a means of expeditiously adjudicating and paying planholders.

Also, the SEC did not say that the spin-off of PPI assets and liabilities to Lifetime Plans and other related companies was fraudulent. What the SEC lamented or characterized as fraud was when PPI went into rehabilitation.

Tecson underscored that rehabilitation is an option for any company in financial distress, pointing out that the rehabilitation plan must not be in any way perceived as an attempt to evade its obligations.

Regine Velasquez not yet off the hook–DOJ

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SONGBIRD is not yet off the hook.

Despite Regine Velasquez's claim of having been negligent in filing her income tax and her offer to pay P3.75 million in tax dues, Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño said the government will pursue the case against the singer-actress.

Zuño said yesterday the operatives of the Run After Tax Evaders program were very clear that there will be no compromise with people charged with tax evasion.

"Her affidavit will not affect the criminal aspect of the case," Zuño told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

In her counter-affidavit, Velasquez admitted that she may have erred in declaring her income, but it did not mean she had "willfully" tried to evade payment of taxes.

The singer, who is Regina Encarnacion A. Velasquez in real life, was charged with tax evasion for allegedly failing to declare P3.75 million in income as product endorser of Nestlé Philippines, Inc. in 2003.

In a four-page counter-affidavit, she said: "I did not willfully attempt to evade or defeat taxes and I did not willfully provide incorrect and inaccurate information to the BIR."

"Since the start of my career in show business, I have been paying my taxes to the government. I have not defrauded ... the government, or anyone for that matter," she said.

She said her failure to declare the Nestlé income could have been an "excusable neglect." Due to her busy schedule, she said she had left the matter of declaring and filing of income tax to her sister, Deca Pineda.

She said she was holding a concert in the United States when a "representative" filed her income tax in 2004 and that it was "physically impossible for me to check the same."

Velasquez said there was no "deliberate, intentional wrongdoing on my part as a taxpayer" and that if the records of the deficiencies had been "reconciled," she was willing "to pay whatever is due the government."

But Zuño said the case "will go on."

P8.4-B coco project illegal, solons say

By Michael Lim Ubac

A JOINT committee of the House of Representatives yesterday thumbed down the proposed P8.4-billion coconut processing plant in Agusan del Sur, saying the use of coco levy funds to undertake the project was illegal.

At a hearing conducted by Lanao del Sur Rep. Benasing Macarambon, chair of the House committee on agriculture and food, and Iloilo Rep. Arthur Defensor, chair of the House committee on good government, lawmakers agreed that the Philippine Coconut Authority was not authorized by any law to use coco levy funds for any project, even if the project was paved with good intentions.

Akbayan party-list Rep. Etta Rosales put it succinctly when she said that coco levy funds could not be touched since it's ownership was still under litigation with the Sandiganbayan.

Haydee Yorac, resigned chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, who was invited to the hearing, said that until the legal questions were settled by the anti-graft court and the Supreme Court, the funds could not be earmarked for any purpose.

Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte noted that "nobody can really dispose off the funds in the manner they would like to irrespective of whether or not it was earmarked for the coconut industry because the status of the ownership of the funds remains unclear."

Villafuerte said the "big question" pertained to the one managing the funds.

"Who is that naughty guy who, knowing that there is that legal question that you can't even use the funds for the nursery project in Agusan, (still pushed for it)? Why was it formalized anyway?" he said.

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Manila mangoes grown in Mexico

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

MANILA mangoes dominate the market in the United States and elsewhere in the world but sadly, despite its name, the mangoes are not exported from the Philippines.

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., chair of the Senate committee on agriculture, said Manila mangoes are exported by Mexico which makes it the world's largest exporter of the succulent fruit.

Magsaysay said the whole thing is misleading.

"Manila mangoes are actually grown in Veracruz, Mexico. The name belongs to us," Magsaysay said.

Magsaysay called on the Departments of Trade and Industry and Agriculture to block the move of the Mexican government to formally own the patent name "Manila mangoes."

"While Mexico acknowledges the fact that the seedlings of its Manila mangoes were actually transported from the Philippines during the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade, it must accord the Philippines due courtesy by awarding to us by default the rightful use of the label," Magsaysay said in a statement.

For a country which boasts of mango as its national fruit, it is ironic that the Philippine mango industry is not getting the exposure it deserves, the senator said.

"Technically, we are competing with our own variety and quality mangoes," Magsaysay said.

Magsaysay pointed out that the Philippines was able to penetrate the fresh mango markets of Japan and Hong Kong and recently the US, which allowed exports of Philippine mangoes only in 2002.

But he said that since the Philippines could no longer use the name Manila mangoes, the country's produce carry the label "Philippine super mangoes."

"But we pale in comparison in terms of sales with Mexico's produce which had long established its name and therefore already enjoys a steady stream of regular customers," Magsaysay said.

Magsaysay said the government should fight for the right to use the name Manila mangoes and aggressively campaign for the superiority and competitiveness of its own variety.

With proper marketing, he said its mangoes are a sure-win dollar earner for the country.

GMA wants Marcos money spent for land reform in 6 months

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo wants the P27 billion Marcos money allocated for land reform programs used up within the next six months.

In a statement yesterday, the President told the National Economic Development Authority-Cabinet Group meeting that she was concerned with the slow pace and lack of transparency in the disbursement of the funds that form bulk of the P35 billion Marcos Swiss bank deposits recovered by the government in 2004.

Land Reform Undersecretary Arne Ang said the government had so far spent only P8.8 billion out of the P17.316 billion set aside for the program from the Marcos money last year.

Ang did not cite any reason for the slow disbursement of the Marcos money but said funds had been "allocated for ongoing projects."

Ang said Ms Arroyo had likewise ordered a full disclosure of how these funds were spent in order to "dispel speculations that the money was being misused."

The President has ordered the the Department of Land Reform to use the money on big-ticket projects such as farm-to-market roads that give longer term benefits to farmers rather than on regular spending programs such as subsidies for fertilizer.

Only P27 billion of the Marcos money would be spent for land reform with the remaining P8 billion allocated to compensate the human rights victims of the Marcos regime.

The government, however, could not reimburse the human rights victims until Congress passes a law allowing the use of the proceeds from ill-gotten wealth cases for non-land reform purposes. *Gil Cabacungan Jr.*

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CRASH PROBE
Watched by local residents, crash investigators led by Aviation Safety Division chief Edgardo Salcepuedes inspects what remains of the Bonanza six-seater aircraft which crashed into a vacant lot in Barangay Guillermo in Morong, Rizal. The pilot, Felimon Mendoza, died in the crash. JOAN BONDOC

GMA asked to take action to free 3 Indon hostages

JAKARTA—Jakarta asked President Macapagal-Arroyo on Wednesday to take action to free three Indonesian fishermen held hostage by rebels in her country's south, the Indonesian foreign minister said.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono had made the request in a telephone conversation with Ms Arroyo, said the minister, Hassan Wirayuda.

"President Arroyo said she had great concern about the issue and had ordered the armed forces, police and the intelligence body to take action to free the hostages," Wirayuda told reporters.

The three Indonesians—Ahmad Resmiyadi, Yamin Labaso and Erikson Hutagaol—were seized in March after their boat was attacked off Malaysia's Sabah region by a group calling itself the Jamiat al-Islamiah of Southern Mindanao.

They were now believed to be held somewhere in Tawi-Tawi.

The Indonesian foreign minister said the captors had demanded 7.5 billion rupiah ($790,000) in ransom from the hostages' employer.

Wirayuda denied last week's media reports that one of the hostages had been executed.

"We had contact with the hostages, and they said they were being treated well," he said. "But it's true that one of them contracted malaria and another had diarrhea."

Medicine had been sent to the hostages, he added.

An Indonesian envoy in the Philippines said last week that the captors had asked embassy officials to send them a camcorder so they could convey their demands on video. *AFP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, May 19, 2005
7th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Sir 5:1-8
Gospel: Mark 9:41-50

Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone gives you a drink of water because you belong to Christ and bear his name, truly, I say to you, he will not go without reward.

"If anyone should cause one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble and sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a great millstone around his neck.

"If your hand makes you fall into sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a hand than with two hands to go to hell, to the fire that never goes out. And if your foot makes you fall into sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a foot than with both feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye makes you fall into sin, tear it out! It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than, keeping both eyes, to be thrown into hell where the worms that eat them never die, and the fire never goes out. The fire itself will preserve them.

"Salt is a good thing; but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another."

Commentary

Jesus continues to amaze his disciples and tells them that if someone, not attached to them, treats them with kindness, even a cup of water to drink, will be rewarded because they did it for them, because they knew they bore the name of Christ. God is generous and gracious—and Jesus is trying to stretch us into the way God looks upon us all. And Jesus also warns them and us that if the way we speak, or act or when we do not act, causes one of these "little ones"—children, the poor, the sinner, the sick and weak, the despised and cast-off, the expendable ones of the earth—to sin then we will be held accountable and treated to God's justice. We are to be careful of all others, especially those most vulnerable to scandal and seeing that we do not live up to our words and belief statements. We are to be salt—what gives flavor, healing, endurance and lasting life to all around us. We are to make sure that we are not rotting everything around us, having lost our salt—the Word and Spirit of God.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (BOOK TWO: CRIMES AGAINST HONOR)—Malice—Every defamatory imputation is presumed malicious. Rima and Alegre failed to show adequately their good intention and justifiable motive in airing the supposed gripes of the students. As hosts of a documentary or public affairs program, Rima and Alegre should have presented the public issues "free from inaccurate and misleading information." Hearing the students' alleged complaints a month before the exposé, they had sufficient time to verify their sources and information. However, Rima and Alegre hardly made a thorough investigation of the students' alleged gripes. Neither did they inquire about nor confirm the purported irregularities in AMEC from the Department of Education, Culture and Sports. Alegre testified that he merely went to AMEC to verify his report from an alleged AMEC official who refused to disclose any information. Alegre simply relied on the words of the students "because they were many and not because there is proof that what they are saying is true." This plainly shows Rima and Alegre's reckless disregard of whether their report was true or not. (Citations omitted.) (Justice Caprio, First Division, Filipinas Broadcasting Network, Inc. v. Ago Medical and Educational Center-Bicol Christian College of Medicine, G. R. No. 141994, January 17, 2005)

By R.B. Vera

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Budget deficit expected to drop to ₱151 B

From page A1

Department of Finance. Representatives of the Department of Budget and Management, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, and National Economic and Development Authority also attended the meeting.

Beltran said the DBCC had assumed a minimum additional collection of P28.75 billion this year from the expanded VAT. The key revenue measure, which President Macapagal-Arroyo is expected to sign into law within the next few days, is aimed at boosting government revenues by as much as P105 billion annually starting next year.

The bill, which takes effect July 1, removes exemptions of several products and services, including electric power, from VAT coverage. The bill also increases the corporate income tax rate from 32 to 35 percent, and gives the President the authority to raise the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent next year.

Beltran said the DBCC had agreed that additional revenues generated from the VAT bill and other new revenue measures would be used mainly in bringing down the budget deficit.

In 2006, 70 percent of the incremental revenues will be used for deficit reduction while 30 percent will be allotted to finance government projects. In 2007, the ratio will be 65:45 in favor of deficit reduction; 2008, 60:40; 2009, 55:35; and 2010, 50:50.

Balanced budget

With the passage of the VAT bill, the Arroyo administration is expecting to achieve a balanced budget as early as 2008.

Beltran said another measure aimed at solving the government's chronic budget deficit was the Lateral Attrition Law, which provides a reward and penalty system for revenue collectors. Passed early this year, the law is estimated to result in an additional revenue of P10 billion.

To further boost revenues and crack down on tax cheats, the government plans to file every week tax evasion charges against known businesses or personalities, improve the Bureau of Internal Revenue's computer systems, and implement the BIR's tax mapping program.

Under the tax mapping program, the BIR fields revenue personnel to check on the tax compliance of commercial establishments. Tax cheats are slapped penalties and required to rectify their tax payments.

The improved outlook on the country's fiscal position came a day after officials said the government likely had a rare budget surplus in April as tax collection—long a weak point—hit a record high.

Budget surplus?

A budget surplus, if confirmed by government data later this week, would be the first in four years.

Ms Arroyo is pushing a series of fiscal reforms to raise revenues for the cash-strapped and debt-laden government but analysts have criticized the pace as too slow.

With the approval of higher "sin taxes," Lateral Attrition Law and the expansion of VAT, the President is now setting her sights "on moving aggressively to the second phase of reforms measures that are required to lift up the poor and turn the nation around."

The second phase of reforms, according to Ms Arroyo, will involve the privatization of the energy sector, mitigation of price increases and continued crackdown on tax cheats.

"More needs to be done to ensure that our reforms are permanent and create a prosperous future," she said in a speech at the 26th National Conference of Employers in Manila. *With reports by Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Reuters*

Hotbabes' Viva big boss . . .

From page A1

movie and record producer, Viva big boss Vic del Rosario, as presidential adviser on entertainment.

This was disclosed yesterday by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita who said Del Rosario has promised to parlay his influence in the local entertainment industry, including reporters who cover the beat, to brush up the President's image in tandem with the country's leading media moguls and spin doctors.

"Mr. Del Rosario has been designated presidential adviser on entertainment and in gratitude, he said he would show that he can do something with those involved in entertainment in bringing out the good things about the government," Ermita said.

Showbiz glitz

The portly entertainment baron was instrumental in injecting showbiz glitz in the campaign rallies of the President who paled before the star appeal of the presidential front runner Fernando Poe Jr.

Del Rosario dutifully brought his Viva Hotbabes, such as Gwen Garci and Jen Rosendahl, to all major campaign rallies of the administration coalition where the presence of the vivacious ladies almost always ensured a full house including and especially of hot-blooded males.

Correct values

"He (Del Rosario) will give advice to the President on how the entertainment industry can help in developing correct values," said Ermita who suggested that Del Rosario be appointed a member of the Commission on Values Formation.

Ermita said Del Rosario was appointed two months ago but a Malacañang official claimed he still has no official appointment papers.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye explained that Del Rosario's appointment was timely considering that the President has just launched a campaign urging the entertainment industry to tone down the culture of violence in TV shows and movies as part of the administration's efforts to combat rising criminality.

Thanksgiving dinner

Ermita said Del Rosario arranged a thanksgiving dinner at the Aguinaldo state dining room hosted by President Arroyo last night for members of the entertainment press.

"We decided to do it here to show there are a lot of sectors that are willing to help the government to project the things that have to be known," said Ermita who acknowledged the "powerful impact of the entertainment industry."

When asked why the President chose Del Rosario aside from helping her campaign with his Viva Hotbabes in the last elections, Ermita said: "I don't know except for the fact that I know he is a veteran of the entertainment industry."

Unsolicited offer

Ermita said Malacañang saw nothing wrong with the offer of Del Rosario and the entertainment industry to help rebuild the image of the President which he likened to the unsolicited offer of help from the Public Relations Society of the Philippines..

"If we get an offer, that is a welcome thing. It is an admission anyway that our ratings our down and we look at it as cooperation to help government," Ermita said. "I don't think she is admitting that she is a lame duck President (by getting help to rebuild her image). In all administrations, governance has to be projected in such a way the people will believe that what the President is doing is for the improvement of the conditions of our people."

Ermita said a poor rating was not necessarily a bad thing because "a reigning president whether in the Philippines or other countries are not popular when there are factors that make governance difficult. "But it does not mean he or she is not doing something to mitigate the problem," Ermita said.

Not just to look good

"We are forgetting that the government's role is to improve the plight of its citizens and not just to make itself look good. There is a big difference. We have to show the more positive aspect of governance."

Partial list of Presidential advisers and assistants

NOLI DE CASTRO, Pres'l Adviser on housing, price monitoring and Filipinq overseas.
GABRIEL S. CLAUDIO Pres'l Adviser for political affairs.
TERESITA Q. DELES Pres'l Adviser on the Peace Process
JOSE S. COJUANGCO, JR. Pres'l Adviser on Food Security & Job Creation
CECILE GUIDOTE ALVAREZ Pres'l Assistant on Culture
CAROLINA G. HERNANDEZ Pres'l Adviser on the recommendations of the Feliciano Commission,
NARCISO Y. SANTIAGO, JR. Pres'l Adviser for Revenue Enhancement
MAJ. GEN. ARTURO B. CARILLO (Ret.) Pres'l Adviser on Military Affairs
P/DIR. ORLANDO A. MACASPAC (Ret.) Pres'l Adviser for Police Afairs
TEODORO T. ENCARNACION Pres'l Adviser on Infrastructure
ALFONSO T. YUCHENGCO Pres'l Adviser on Foreign Affairs
FRANCISCO G. SILVA Pres'l Adviser on Rural Electrification
ROBERTO ROMULO, Senior Pres'l Adviser on International Competitiveness
TONY KWQK, Pres'l Adviser on anticorruption
JOSE MA A. CONCEPCION III, Pres'l consultant for entrepreneurship
RODOLFO P. DEL ROSARIO Pres'l Adviser for New Gov't Centers
AMB. RODOLFO C. SEVERINO Pres'l Adviser for Trade & Dev't
FRANCISCO H. LICUANAN III Adviser for Clark-Subic Dev't
PETER FAVILA, Pres'l Adviser on Infrastructure Finance
LUIS T. SANTOS Consultant on DILG Matters
RAFAEL COSCOLLUELA Pres'l Adviser for Western Visayas,
GLORIA TAN CLIMACO Pres'l Adviser for strategic projects
SILVESTRE AFABLE Pres'l Adviser on Communications
MARITA "MAI" JIMENEZ Pres'l Adviser on overseas development assistance projects
ROY A. CIMATU Special Envoy of the President
FLORENCIO D. FIANZA Special Envoy for Transnational Crimes
DAN ROLEDA Pres'l assistant on foreign investments
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PDI RESEARCH
Source: DBM and PDI Archives

NBI Seized P5 Million Worth of Fake "National" Wiring Devices

Agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) seized large quantities of fake **"National"** electrical products (switches, outlets, chips and plates) bearing raids of factory in Quezon City.

NBI identified the establishment as A-Last Commercial owned by Hsuh Chun Chuan aka Jun Jun Sy with warehouses located at No. 162 Calamba St. cor. 58 Sto. Domingo St., Quezon City.

The case stemmed from the joint efforts of Matsushita Electric Works and Avesco Marketing Corporation with the assistance of National Bureau of Investigation for the investigation regarding proliferation of counterfeit "National" Switches and Outlets in the market.

Acting on the request, agents of the INTERPOL DIVISION supervised by Dominador M. Villanueva III conducted a surveillance and test buy operation.

After confirming the report, search warrant were applied for and issued by Judge Antonio M. Eugenio Jr. at the Manila Regional Trial Court against Jun Jun Sy of A-Last Commercial.

Last May 6, 2005 INTERPOL operatives served the search warrants at the said areas owned by Jun Jun Sy.

Found and seized were approximately P5 million worth of fake National products like switches, electrical outlets and other electrical materials and the machines used for assembling the National products.

(ABOVE) One of the machines used in assembling fake "National" Switches

(BELOW) Php5 Million worth of fake "National" products seized by NBI.

WARNING is hereby given that individuals and entities engaged, directly or indirectly, in the unauthorized manufacture, importation, distribution and/or sale of counterfeit **"National"** products should immediately cease and desist from their unlawful acts, otherwise they will be prosecuted criminally, civilly and administratively. The unauthorized use on merchandise of the trademark **"National"** and the use of the identical or confusingly similar representation or packaging of the genuine products constitute counterfeiting and are criminal offenses penalized under our laws on trademark and copyright infringement, and/or unfair competition.

Information on the unauthorized manufacture, importation, distribution and or sale of counterfeit **"National"** products may be relayed to the NBI agents and attorneys hereunder named. Any information given and the identities of informers, if disclosed, will be held in strict confidence.

Dominador M. Villanueva III
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NAIA Road, Parañaque City

Puregold Price Club – Las Piñas
Real St., Talon Uno, Las Piñas City

Puregold Price Club – Tayuman
Tayuman corner Juan Luna
Tondo, Manila

Puregold Price Club – Imus
FRC Mall, Imus, Cavite

Puregold Price Club – Biñan
Pavillion Mall, Km. 35 San Antonio, Biñan, Laguna

Puregold Price Club – Valenzuela
McArthur Highway, Valenzuela City

Puregold Price Club – Dau
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on all vital medicines listed below up to the end of

2005

ANALGESIC: (Paracetamol, Ibuprofen) • Alaxan Tab (Paracetamol, Ibuprofen) • Alaxan FR cap • (Menthol, Methylsalicylate) Alaxan Gel • (Mefenamic Acid) Dolfenal 250mg tab • (Mefenamic Acid) Dolfenal 500mg tab • (Paracetamol, Ibuprofen) Muskelax tab • (Mefenamic Acid) New Revalan 250mg tab • (Mefenamic Acid) New Revalan 500mg tab **POTENT ANALGESIC:** (Tramadol) Siverol 50mg Cap • (Tramadol) Siverol 50mg Amp 1mL • (Tramadol) Siverol 100MG Amp 2mL • (Ketorolac) Kortezor 30mg Amp 1mL **ANTI-FEVER:** (Paracetamol) Biogesic 120mg/5mL Strawberry Susp • (Paracetamol) Biogesic 250mg/5mL Strawberry Susp • (Paracetamol) Biogesic 120mg/5mL Orange Susp • (Paracetamol) Biogesic 250mg/5mL Orange Susp • (Paracetamol) Biogesic 100mg/mL Orange Drops 15mL • (Paracetamol) Neo-Kiddilets Tab • (Ibuprofen) Dolan FP Susp • (Paracetamol) Naprex Pediatech-Orange 120mg/5ml susp • (Paracetamol) Naprex Pediatech-Orange 250mg/5ml susp • (Paracetamol) Naprex 300mg/2mL Amp • (Paracetamol) Naprex Pediatech-Melon 120mg/5mL • (Paracetamol) Naprex Pediatech-Melon 250mg/5mL **ANTI-HEADACHE/ FEVER:** (Paracetamol) Biogesic Tab **ANTI-HEADACHE:** (Ibuprofen) Medicol tab **ANTI-ARTHRITIS:** (Diclofenac) Neo-Pyrazon 50mg Tab **ANESTHETIC:** (Levobupivacaine) Sensibloq 2.5mg Vial 10mL • (Levobupivacaine) Sensibloq 5.0mg Vial 10mL **COUGH RELIEF - MULTI SYMPTOM:** • (DXM, Paracetamol, PPA) Tuseran Forte Cap • (DXM, PPA) Tuseran Syr **ANTI-FLU:** (PPA, CPM, Paracetamol) Bioflu tab **COLD RELIEF:** (PPA) Disudrin-Orange Drop • (PPA) Disudrin-Orange Syr • (PPA, CPM, Paracetamol) Decolgen Forte tab • (PPA) Decolgen Oral Drops • (PPA) Decolgen Syr • (PPA, Paracetamol) No-Drowse Decolgen Tab • (PPA, CPM) Neozep Oral Drp 10mL • (PPA, CPM, Paracetamol) Neozep Forte Tab • (PPA, Paracetamol) Neozep Non-Drowsy Tab • (PPA, CPM, Paracetamol) Neozep Syr Cough Relief **MUCOLYTIC:** (Carbocisteine) Solmux 500mg Cap • (Carbocisteine) Solmux Forte Susp • (Carbocisteine) Solmux 200mg Susp • (Carbocisteine) Solmux 100mg Sus • (Carbocisteine) Solmux 40mg Drop **ANTI-ALLERGY:** (Diphenhydramine, PPA) Allerin Syr • (Loratadine) Allerta tab • (Loratadine) Allerta syr **ANTI-DIARRHEAL:** (Loperamide) Diatabs Cap • (Loperamide) Lormide 2mg Cap **VITAMINS:** (Vitamin C) Ceelin Drops • (Vitamin C) Ceelin Syr • (Vitamin E) Myra 400E Cap • (Vitamin E) Myra 300E Cap • (Vitamin E) Enervon E Cap • (Vitamin C) Cetrinets tab **MULTI-VITAMINS:** (Vitamin C, B Complex) Enervon-C Tab • (Vitamin C, B Complex) Enervon-C Syr • (Vitamin C, B Complex) Enervon-C Drop • (Multivitamins) Nutrilin PediaTech Syr • (Multivitamins) Nutrilin PediaTech Drops **MULTI-VITAMINS WITH MINERALS:** (Multivitamins + minerals) Revicon Improved Tab • (Multivitamins + minerals w/ royal jelly and ginseng) Revicon Max Cap • Multivitamins + minerals) Nutroplex w/Lysine • (Multivitamins + minerals) Tiki-Tiki Plus Drop • (Multivitamins + minerals w/ selenium) Vigor-Ace Cap • (Multivitamins + minerals) Enervon w/ E&Zinc Tab **ENERGY DRINK:** (Multivitamins w/ minerals, royal jelly, ginseng, citrus) Revicon ION Energy Drink **ANTI-ANEMIA:** (Iron, B Complex, folate) Ferlin Syr • (Iron B complex) Ferlin Drop • (B complex, Iron) Fortifer Tab • (B complex, Iron, Folate) Fortifer-FA Cap • (B complex, Iron, Vit C, Vit E) Hemarate Liq • (B complex, Iron, Vit C. Vit E) Hemarate Tab **PRE-NATAL VITAMINS:** (Vit A, B complex, Vit E) Genalin-OD Tab **APPETITE STIMULANT:** (B complex, Buclizine, Vit C, Iron) Appebon w/Iron Cap • (B complex, Buclizine, Vit C, Iron) Appebon w/Iron Syr • (Buclizine, B complex, Vit C) Appebon 500 Tab • (Buclizine, B complex, Iron) Appebon 500 Syr **NEUROMYOTONICS:** (B complex, Vit C) Neurogen-E Tab • (Nicotinic acid, B complex) Vaneular Tab **HOSPITAL ACQUIRED INFECTIONS:** (Ceftriaxone) Forgram 1g IV Vial • (Ceftriaxone) Forgram 250mg IV Vial • (Ceftriaxone) Forgram 500mg IV Vial • (Ceftazidime) Zeptrigen 250mg IV • (Ceftazidime) Zeptrigen 500mg IV ∑ (Ceftazidime) Zeptrigen 1gm IV • (Amikacin) Amikacide 500mg Amp • (Amikacin) Amikacide 250mg Amp • (Amikacin) Amikacide 100mg Amp **UPPER AND LOWER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS:** (Co-amoxyclav) Amoclav 375mg Tab • (Co-amoxyclav) Amoclav 625mg Tab • (Co-amoxyclav) Amoclav 1Gm Tab • (Co-amoxyclav) Amoclav 156.25 /5mL Sus • (Co-amoxyclav) Amoclav 312.5/5mL Sus • (Co-amoxyclav) Amoclav 600mg Vial 10mL • (Co-amoxyclav) Amoclav 1.2Gm Vial 10mL **UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS:** (Amoxicillin) Himox 100mg Drop • (Amoxicillin) Himox 250 Cap • (Amoxicillin) Himox 500 Cap • (Amoxicillin) Himox 125 Susp • (Amoxicillin) Himox 250mg Sus • (Cefaclor) Xelent 250mg cap • (Cefaclor) Xelent 500mg Cap • (Cefaclor) Xelent 125mg/5 mL susp • (Cefaclor) Xelent 250mg/5mL susp • (Cefaclor) Xelent 50 Drop • (Ampicillin) Ampicin 500 Vial • (Ampicillin) Ampicin 250 Vial • (Ampicillin) Ampicin 250 cap • (Ampicillin) Ampicin 500 cap • (Penicillin VK) Sumapen-B 250 Cap • (Penicillin VK) Sumapen-B 500 Cap • (Penicillin VK) Sumapen-B 250/5mL susp • (Penicillin VK) Sumapen-B 125/5mL susp • Amoxicillin) Pediamox 250mg Susp • (Amoxicillin) Pediamox Drp 10mL • (Cefalexin) Lexum 250mg Cap • (Cefalexin) Lexum 500mg Cap • (Cefalexin) Lexum 125mg/5mL Sus • (Cefalexin) Lexum 250mg/5mL Sus • (Cefalexin) Lexum 100mg/mL Drop • (Amoxicillin) Moxillin-B 500mg Cap • (Amoxicillin) Moxillin Drp • (Amoxicillin) Moxillin 250mg Susp • (Amoxicillin) Moxillin 500mgx1 Vial • (Amoxicillin) Sumoxil-B 500mg Cap • (Amoxicillin) Sumoxil 125mg Sus • (Amoxicillin) Sumoxil 250mg Sus • (Amoxicillin) Sumoxil Drop • (Amoxicillin) Sumoxil 500 Vial **LOWER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS:** (Cefuroxime) Zegen 250 Cap • (Cefuroxime) Zegen 500 Cap • (Cefuroxime) Zegen 750mg Vial • (Levofloxacin) Levox 250mg Tab • (Levofloxacin) Levox IV 500mg/100mL • (Levofloxacin) Levox 500 Tab • (Levofloxacin) Floxel 250mg Tab • (Levofloxacin) Floxel IV 500mg/100mL • (Levofloxacin) Floxel 500 Tab • (Cefixime) Zefral 100mg Cap • (Cefixime) Zefral 200mg • (Cefixime) Zefral 100mg susp • (Cefixime) Zefral Drops • (Cefixime) Ultraxime 20mg Drop • (Cefixime) Ultraxime 100mg Sus **URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS:** (Ofloxacin) Inoflox 200mg Tab • (Ofloxacin) Inoflox 400mg Tab • (Ofloxacin) Inoflox 200mg 100mL • (Cefalexin) Cefalin 100 Drop 10mL • (Cefalexin) Cefalin 250 Susp • (Cefalexin) Cefalin 250 Cap • (Cefalexin) Cefalin 500mg/5mL Susp • (Cefalexin) Cefalin 125mg/5mL Sus • (Norfloxacin) Uritracin 400 New Tab **SKIN INFECTIONS:** (Doxycycline) Doxin 100mg Cap • (Flucloxacillin) Stafloxin 250mg Cap • (Flucloxacillin) Stafloxin 500mg Cap • (Flucloxacillin) Stafloxin 500mg Vial 1mL • (Flucloxacillin) Stafloxin 125mg Sus 60mL **IMMUNO ENHANCER:** (Inosiplex) Immunosin 500mg Tab • (Inosiplex) Immunosin 250mg Syr **EAR INFECTIONS:** (Ofloxacin) Inoflox Otic Sol. 5mL **EYE INFECTIONS:** (Ofloxacin) Inoflox 3mg Eye Drp 5ml **ANTI-TYPHOID:** (Chloramphenicol) Pediachlor Susp **SURGICAL INFECTIONS:** (Cefazolin Na) Stancef 0.5g/mLx1 Vial • (Cefazolin Na) Stancef 1.0g/mLx1 Vial **GASTRO-INTESTINAL TRACT INFECTIONS:** (Co-trimoxazole) Trizole Liq **ANTI-ASTHMATIC COUGH:** (Salbutamol, Carbocisteine) Solmux Broncho(R) Cap • (Salbutamol, Carbocisteine) Solmux Broncho(R) Susp • (Salbutamol, Guaifenesin) Asmalin Broncho Cap 100 • (Salbutamol, Guaifenesin) Asmalin Broncho Syr 60mL **ANTI-ASTHMA:** (Salbutamol) Asmalin Tab • (Salbutamol) Asmalin Syr • (Salbutamol) Asmalin 100mcg non-CFC • (Salbutamol) Asmalin 100mcg/Actuasion Inhaler • (Theophylline) Asmasolon Tab 100 **ANTI-TB:** (Rifampicin, Isoniazid, Ethambutol, Pyrazinamide) Quadtab • (Rifampicin, Isoniazid, Pyrazinamide) Triofix Tab • (Rifampicin, Isoniazid, Ethambutol) Tritab • (Rifampicin, Isoniazid) Bifix Tab • (Rifampicin) Rimaped 200 SD Susp • (Isoniazid) Comprilex Syr • (Isoniazid) Trisofort Liq • (Isoniazid) Trisofort 400 Tab **TOPICAL ANTI-BACTERIAL:** (Neomycin, polymyxin, bactitracin) Trimycin Pln Oint 10Gm • (Neomycin, polymyxin, bactitracin, hydrocortisone) Trimycin-H Oint 5Gm **ORAL ANTI-FUNGAL:** (Fluconazole) Funzela 150mg Tab 1 **ANTI-ACID:** (Aluminum hydroxide, magnesium hydroxide, simethicone) Kremil-S Tab **ANTI-ULCER:** (Famotidine) H2 Bloc-20mg Tab • (Famotidine) H2 Bloc-40mg Tab • (Famotidine) H2 Bloc-20mg Amp 1mL **ORAL REHYDRATION:** (sodium chloride, sodium bicarbonate, potassium chloride) Hydrite Tab • (sodium chloride, sodium bicarbonate, potassium chloride) Hydrite Sachet 2.7Gm **ANTI-SPASMODIC:** (Dicycloverine HCl) Relestal Syr • (Dicycloverine HCl) Relestal Drop **ANTI-THROMBOTIC:** (Aspirin)Aspilets **ANTI-HYPERTENSIVE/CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE:** (Imidapril) Norten 5mg Tab • (Imidapril) Norten 10mg Tab • (Imidapril) Vascor 5mg Tab • (Imidapril) Vascor 10mg Tab • (Fosinopril) BP Norm 10 Tab **ANTI-HYPERTENSIVE:** (Felodipine) Versant XR 5mg Tab • (Manidipine) Minadil 10mg Tab • (Manidipine) Minadil 20mg Tab • (Nicardepine) Cardepine 10 Tab • (Nicardepine) Cardepine 20 Tab **ANTI-HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS:** (Nicardepine) Cardepine 2mg/2mL Amp 5 • (Nicardepine) Cardepine 10mg/10mL Amp **ANTI-ANGINA:** (Atenolol) Therabloc 25mg Tab • (Atenolol) Therabloc 50mg Tab • (Metoprolol) Cardiosel 50 Tab • (Metoprolol) Cardiosel 100 Tab • (Diltiazem) Zandil 30mg Tab • (Diltiazem) Zandil 60mg Tab **DIURETIC:** (Furosemide) Frusema 20mg Tab • (Furosemide) Frusema 40mg Tab • (Furosemide) Frusema 20mg Amp **ANTI-CHOLESTEROL:** (Simvastatin) Vidastat 10mg Tab • (Simvastatin) Vidastat 20mg Tab • (Simvastatin) Vidastat 40mg Tab **ORAL ANTI-INFLAMMATORY STEROID:** (Dexamethasone) Decilone Forte Tab • (Dexamethasone) Decilone Pln Tab • (Dexamethasone) Drenex .75mg Tab • (Dexamethasone) Drenex 3mg Tab **GROWTH HORMONE:** (Somatropin) GenHeal **ANTI-DIABETES:** (Gliclazide) Glubitor 80mg Tab • (Gliclazide) Glubitor 30mg OD Tab • (Metformin) Glumet 500 Tab **ANTI-HYPERURICEMIA** (Allopurinol) Llanol 100mg Tab • (Allupurinol) Llanol 300mg Tab • (Allupurinol) Purinase 100mg Tab • (Allupurinol) Purinase 300mg Tab **ANTI-HEMORRHAGE:** (Tranexamic Acid) Hemostan 250mg Cap • (Tranexamic Acid) Hemostan 500mg Cap • (Tranexamic Acid) Hemostan 250mg/2.5mL Amp • (Tranexamic Acid) Hemostan 500mg/5mL Amp **ANTI-UTERINE BLEEDING:** (Isoxsuprine) Isoxilan Tab • (Isoxsuprine) Isoxilan Amp **ANTI-CANCER:** (Carboplatin) Biovinate 150mg Vial 15mL • (Carboplatin) Biovinate 450mg • Cytarabine 100mg/5mL Vial • (Cisplatin) Docistin 1mg/mL Vial 10mL • (Cisplatin) Docistin 1mg/mL Vial 50mL • (Mitoxantrone) Domitrone 10mg Vial 5mL • (Mitoxantrone) Domitrone 20mg Vial 10mL • Doxorubicin 10mg Vial • Doxorubicin 50mg/25mL Vial • Fluorouracil 500/20mL • (Leukovorin) Bio Lovorin 50mg/5mL • (Methotrexate) Bio Methotrexate 50mg 2mL • (Etoposide) Topresid 100mg Vial 5mL • (Vincristine Sulfate) Bio Vincristine S04 V 1mL • (Vincristine Sulfate) Bio Vincristine S04 V 2mL **SKIN CARE:** (glycerin, mineral water) Celeteque Facial Wash Liq • (natural moisturizing factors) Celeteque Facial Moisturizer Liq

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400,000 GUNS WITH EXPIRED LICENSES

PNP claims gains in drive vs loose firearms

By Luige A. del Puerto

POLICE authorities yesterday declared that they were gaining ground in their campaign against loose firearms.

In the first five months, 817 unlicensed guns have been seized, according to Deputy Director General Ricardo de Leon, Philippine National Police deputy chief for operations. Last year, police confiscated 903 firearms.

If the trend continues, the PNP would have reduced the number of loose firearms by at least 1,000 by the end of 2005.

"The chief PNP (Director General Arturo Lomibao) has given instructions to me personally and the director of FED (Firearms and Explosives Division) to step up our campaign against loose firearms," De Leon said.

De Leon has been vigorously pushing for stricter control over the sale, display and importation of guns. A few weeks ago, police banned the display of high powered firearms in stores and gun shows and their use as a category in gun competitions.

Records from the FED showed that the number of loose firearms stood at 149,501 as of 2004.

The number of expired licenses also ballooned to more than 400,000, or about half of the country's 900,000 registered guns last year.

This week, the Association of Firearms and Ammunitions Dealers (Afad) of the Philippines said licensed gun owners were not the problem but the holders of loose firearms.

"We respect the President's prerogative on the gun issue, but our legislators should distinguish between loose firearms in the hands of criminals and unlicensed firearms in the hands of peace-loving citizens," Afad said in a statement.

Nereo Dionisio, Afad president, cited FED records indicated that only 12 firearms were licensed compared to 1,719 unlicensed firearms in 2004 which were involved in criminal cases."

The 12 cases were "minor infractions of gun laws and not related to murders of journalists and high profile personalities," he said.

FED records showed that 87 percent of the firearms used in crime from 1993 to December 2004, or 13,131 guns, were unlicensed, while the rest (1,965 guns) were licensed.

The gun association was reacting to a directive issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo during an anticrime summit to "look into legislation that can tackle access to firearms and bring their availability under control."

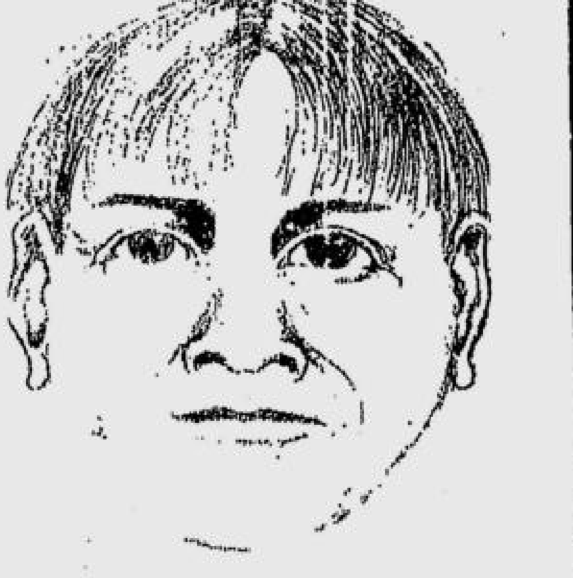
It said the firearms industry had been doing its share in nation building by paying taxes and generating work.

Some 3,000 families depend on the firearms industry, Afad said.

It lamented that the current gun amnesty allows a holder of a loose firearm to license it "without securing any of the requirements normally imposed on regular license applications."

The practice has deprived the government of needed revenues from customs duties and value-added tax and encourages firearms smuggling, it said.

"In the end, legitimate business and peace loving gun owners shall bear the brunt of another assault on gun ownership, but the killings and murders perpetrated by the use of unlicensed guns shall remain unabated," it said.



POLICE sketch of suspect

Columnist survives slay try: I shot first

From page A1

were behind both attempts.

Hernandez reported the incident to Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, spokesperson of the Philippine National Police.

He said he was driving his car, a 1979 Toyota Corona, with a companion, identified as George Macalla, at around 3:30 a.m. when he noticed that they were being tailed by two men on a motorcycle along San Gregorio Street in Valenzuela.

After he fired his gun, Hernandez said the attackers shot back while fleeing, hitting his car. He said he and Macalla were able to get out of the car during the exchange and take cover at a nearby house.

Director General Arturo Lomibao, PNP chief, who is in Indonesia, issued an order to "investigate the incident, identify the attackers, and get them," Bataoil said.

Motive

Authorities have not yet determined the motive for the attack on Hernandez, who is authorized to carry a gun for self-protection.

The shooting was the latest in a rash of attacks on journalists in the Philippines that have claimed the lives of five journalists this year and 13 last year, helping to earn the country the title as one of the world's most hazardous places for journalists.

Last week, a gift-wrapped bomb sent to the home of a radio announcer in Monkayo town in Compostela Valley exploded, killing an 11-year-old boy and wounding three barangay guards (*tanod*).

Police officials have said there is no evidence to support suggestions that journalists are being systematically targeted.

Threats

Hernandez said he had been receiving threats, through telephone calls and mobile phone text messages, since he began writing a column, "Prangkahan," for Bulgar in 1995. He said he never took the threats seriously.

He refused an offer of police protection from Director Avelino Razon, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office. "I am grateful of the offer, but I don't trust the police right now," he said.

The columnist said those allegedly involved in the attack could be police officers. He cited a case of frustrated murder he filed against Supt. Demosthenes Felix of the Philippine Maritime Command in Navotas and his subordinate, SPO1 Bonito Antiniones.

The two officers were implicated by an alleged hired killer, identified as Joel Reduca, who attacked and wounded Hernandez with a knife at the Side Pocket Billiard Hall on Quezon Avenue in Quezon City at around 4 a.m. on Feb. 8.

Although he was hurt, Hernandez said he was able to subdue Reduca with the help of other billiards players.

He claimed that Reduca, 34, had confessed that Felix and Antiniones paid him P20,000 to kill the columnist.

Mastermind

"The driver of Felix is the key to know the mastermind," the columnist said. Had the mastermind been exposed, he said, there could have been no second attempt on his life.

Felix and his driver, Antiniones and Reduca visited the alleged mastermind's house hours before he was stabbed, Hernandez alleged.

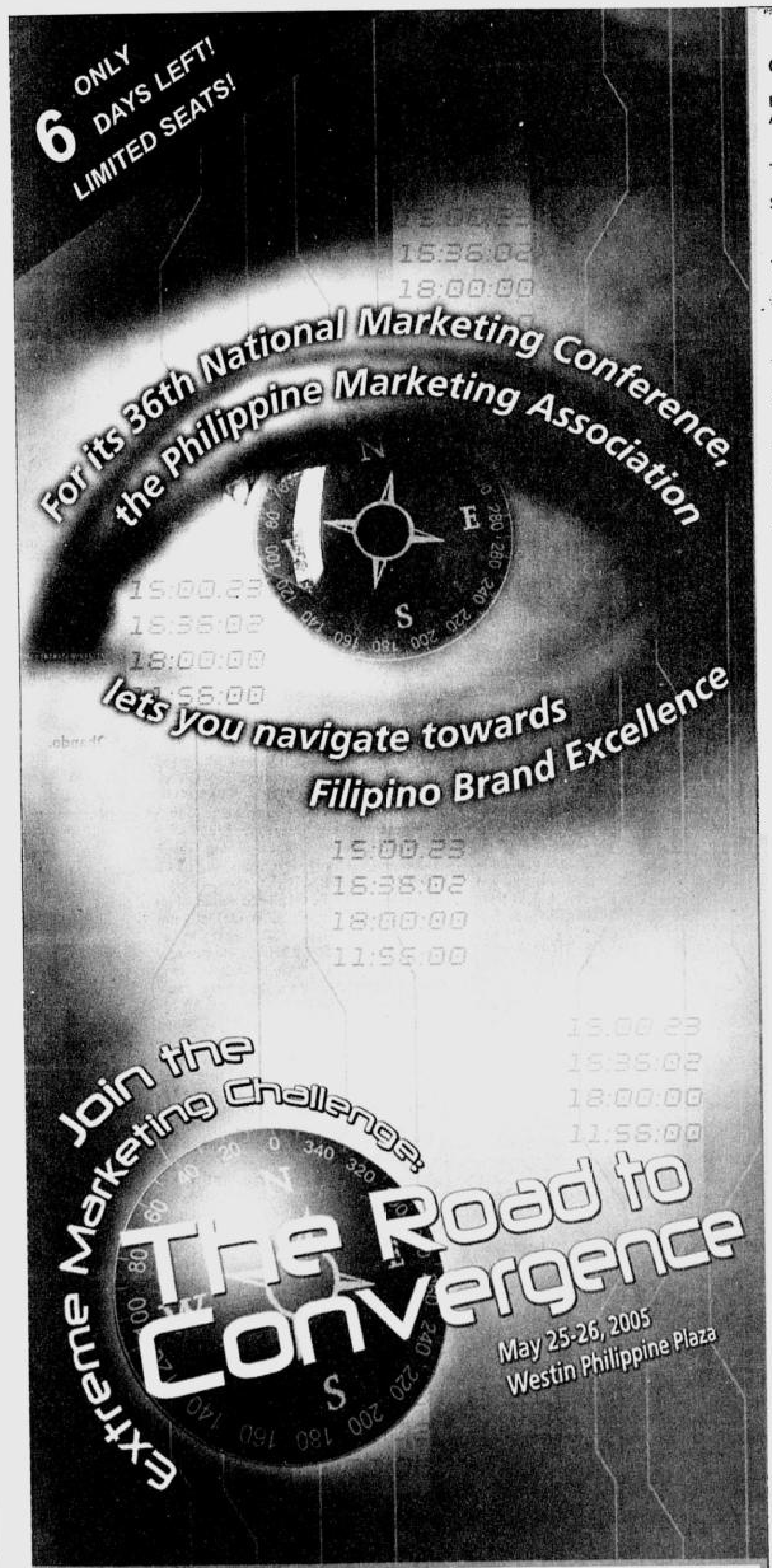
After meeting with Hernandez, Bataoil called Supt. Billy Beltran, chief of the Valenzuela police, to investigate the latest attack.

5 witnesses

According to Beltran, five witnesses had given their statements to police. They said they saw a Tamaraw FX van and three motorcycles with two men on board each vehicle going around the area before the encounter.

Beltran said they were looking at another angle. "It could also be a hold-up try, looking at the way the vehicle was blocked," he said.

With an AFP report



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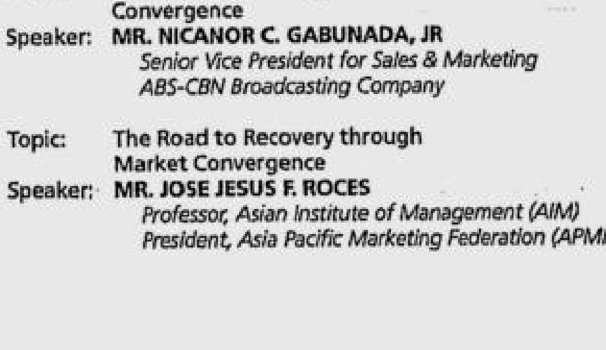

EURO RSCG MANILA
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The other side of the island paradise stinks

From page A1

the mayor said.

But it did not work out because the Department of Environment and Natural Resources failed to give its share of P500,000 for operations. "We only have P100,000. We cannot operate the composting plant," Cawaling said.

A narrow, rough road that passes the Fairways and Blue Water Resort Golf and Country Club leads to the dump. (Fairways has a helipad normally used by the Presidential Security Group whenever the occupant of Malacañang visits the island.)

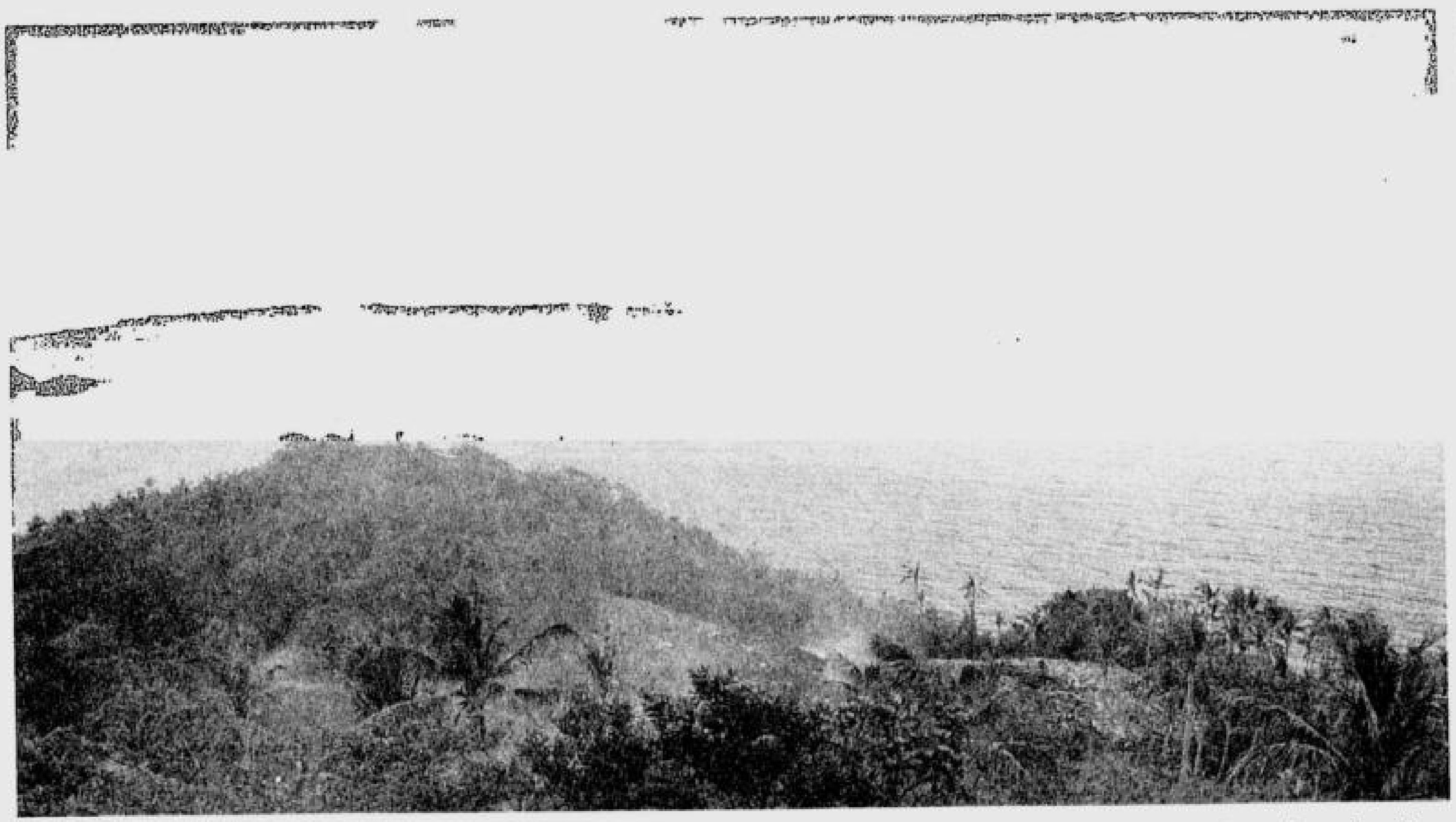
Eking out a living on an island promoted abroad as a tourist haven is a burden on scavenger Arnold Geraspe, 54.

"It's a lucky day if I find a necklace, a ring, or anything in silver," Geraspe said in Cebuano.

The INQUIRER found Geraspe, a former carpenter, poking about the fresh garbage dumped that Friday morning.

All he had found so far were assorted pieces of scrap iron, which he sells at the local junkyard at P3 per kilo.

He said he would be happy if he could bring home P50 that day to his wife, nine children and five grandchildren.



IT'S NATURE at its best that not even a garbage dump can diminish what has got to be a scenery landscaped in heaven. The garbage disposal problem is first of all a problem because no one appears to be in charge. Local and national government agencies are pointing at each other. VAL HANDUMON

P2M for trash disposal

Consisting of three barangays, Boracay is part of the little-known municipality of Malay. Of the town's 17 barangays, three—Yapac, Balabag and Manoc-manoc—are on the island.

Malay spends P2 million for garbage disposal but receives only P1.2 million in garbage collection fees, Cawaling said.

"See, *abonado pa* (we have to take up the slack)," he said.

According to the mayor, Boracay contributes 80 percent of the taxes collected by Malay. From business permits alone, Boracay contributes P16 million a year.

The revenues from Boracay have boosted the income of Malay, which ranks second to Kalibo, the capital town of Aklan, in terms of remittances to the national government, Cawaling said.

But for all that, Malay receives an Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) of only P22 million a year from the national government. The IRA is based on land area and population, not on revenues generated by the municipality, he said.

"And what more do we get? We get blamed for all the problems here!" he exclaimed.

No cooperation

Engineer Ma. Mignon del Rosario, head of the Boracay Environmental Infrastructure Project of the Philippine Tourism Authority, said the PTA had allowed the local government to use a PTA-owned lot as a composting site in an attempt to help solve the garbage problem.

"The plan was to have an open, but controlled, dump. But it could not be properly implemented," Del Rosario said by phone.

She said the PTA and the local government signed a memorandum of agreement early this year. The Lapuz-lapuz dump was closed after the signing but was reopened just before the Easter fortnight, a "peak season" in Boracay.

Del Rosario said solid waste management was hard to implement because there was no segregation of garbage at the source.

"Nobody is cooperating," she said.

According to Del Rosario, an earlier plan was to set up an incinerator in Boracay. But this was shelved with the passage of the Clean Air Act. The passage of RA 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, also transferred the task of waste management to the DENR.

"So the PTA's out," Del Rosario said. But she admitted that solid waste management remained "a major issue in Boracay."

Landfill

Cawaling said he had also proposed that an "engineered landfill" be set up on the Aklan mainland.

"But there has been no response from the national government. We cannot do this alone," he said.

Still, the town has purchased a 3-hectare lot for P9 million for the proposed landfill, and invested in bulldozers, graders and payloaders.

Cawaling said he had also identified the proposed landfill site to the Environment Management Bureau.

"I want to be sure that the site will pass the criteria set by the DENR," he said.

Puka shells

Boracay first gained fame in the 1970s and 1980s for its puka shells, which were strung into necklaces.

Today, however, Puka Beach on Barangay Balabag is desolate, peopled mostly by fishermen rather than tourists.

But the economic boom brought by tourism has left an imprint with which even youngsters are familiar.

The INQUIRER found Edwin, 12, and his 10-year-old brother lolling on Puka Beach at just about sunset. They offered to take us island-hopping.

The boys gave us a phone number to call, and showed off their father's pump boat, which was docked on the beach. The quoted fee was P1,500 for four hours.

Argee, a 19-year-old tricycle driver, said life on Boracay was hardly paradise.

A high-school graduate, Argee has no plans of going to college.

He said he had to help his mother, a cook at a resort earning a little over P2,000 a month, support the family of seven.

"Here, the tourists pay in dollars, but we get paid in centavos," Argee said.

Not a solution

In Manila, PTA general manager Robert Dean Barbers said a moratorium on development was not the solution to Boracay's woes.

"If only the master development plan is enforced well, we should not have any problem," he said in a phone interview. "There are enough regulations already. What we need is compliance."

Barbers said the PTA and the Department of Tourism should be given police powers to help the local government implement the master development plan, which covers many aspects of the operation of Boracay as a tourism zone.

"Maybe we can help if they give us more teeth to improve our capability to enforce these regulations," he said.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano had earlier said Boracay was in a "critical condition" and announced that there would be no further development on the island until they could put a certain order in place.

Durano said many establishments had been blatantly violating ordinances on environment protection, infrastructure, zoning and commercial activity.

He said that some establishments had secretly dug holes to dump wastes in despite an existing prohibition, and that others had built extensions of their facilities over natural waterways.

One firm has even obtained a permit to operate a golf course that instead became a water supplier, he added.

Bread and butter

Barbers also cited the water and sewerage treatment plant that the PTA set up in 2003.

He said he had expected the target 200 resorts, hotels and tourism establishments to subscribe to the plant but that so far, only half the number had done so.

"They are simply hard-headed. There is no problem with the cost because the fees charged would be based on the water consumption," he said, adding:

"The irony of it all is that the government is totally supportive to protect the very bread and butter of the resort and hotel owners of Boracay by providing them quality water and sewerage plants to safeguard the very existence of their business. But most of them ignore this privilege." *With a report from Jerome Aning*

Obando ...

From page A1

UNIQUE fertility rites are held every year in Obando from May 17-19. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

FILE photo of devotees dancing in Obando. Dancing during the religious procession reportedly makes barren females fertile.

flock to this town during the feast days of the patron saints to sing and dance in the streets as a way of imploring the saints to give them children or help them find their partners.

Thanks for harvest

Couples who have been blessed with children return to this town to offer thanksgiving prayers.

The town's farmers and fishermen also join the dancing to thank the saints for their bountiful harvest and catch.

Santiago said music and physical education teachers would be tasked with teaching the native song and dance steps to the students.

The project aims to preserve the town's rich tradition of Obando, he said, noting that the younger residents seemed to have lost interest in their cultural heritage.

Santiago said the municipal council had started drafting an ordinance ordering all private and public elementary and high schools to include the local cultural lessons in their curriculums.

Santiago had earlier banned popular ditties, such as "Ocho Ocho," "Spaghetti," "Jumbo Hotdog" and "Bulaklak" from school and public programs, saying these songs have "double meanings."

The mayor was referring to the songs' supposed subtle reference to sex.

He said he did not want local children to forget the rich and distinct musical treasure of Obando and its people.

"Instead of seeing them dancing to the tune of 'Spaghetti' and gyrating in revealing clothes, our children must be taught to appreciate the refined and graceful steps of the Sta. Clara Pinong Pino," Santiago said.

He said the local government during the feast sponsored a street dancing competition among the 11 barangays to promote "Sta. Clara Pinong Pino."

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Fabrications, says Mike A; other execs issue denials

THE CAMP of Mike Arroyo last night dismissed as "fabrications". and a "trying hard attempt" the allegations that he was a beneficiary of jueteng money in Bicol.

In a statement, lawyer Jess Santos, Mike Arroyo's spokesperson, said the First Gentleman "has not talked to or seen Mario Espinosa in the last three years."

"This is nothing but black propaganda," Santos said.

But Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye confirmed that Espinosa did serve as presidential adviser for Bicol "at one time."

"He has been replaced by ... Chito Monson," Bunye said in a text message.

The officials named by B1, B2 and O1 promptly denied the allegations.

A spokesperson for Chavit Singson said this was an "old story" and accused Lacson of being behind the accusations.

Benjamin Gonzales, spokesperson for Jose Yap, said: "We don't have to comment on the allegations. They have to provide proof that we're on the take."

Mariano Cristino Joson said he was not a gambling lord and had never been involved in illegal gambling.

Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte assailed Lacson for supposedly insinuating that his son, Governor Villafuerte, was involved in jueteng.

"But I say that he (Lacson) wanted to hit back at us because we did not support him in his bid for the presidency even if we were both with the LDP then," the elder Villafuerte said.

3 'jueteng' witnesses name Mike Arroyo, Mikey, Chavit

From page A1

LACSON: Very explosive testimony.

MIKE ARROYO: Trying hard attempt

MIKEY ARROYO: Black propaganda PDI PHOTOS

for Espinosa in April last year, or a month before the May 2004 presidential election.

B1 also said Espinosa, who was his next-door neighbor, assigned him to collect the money.

Monthly allowance

A former bagman in Central Luzon (or B2) also told the INQUIRER that before he became congressman, Mikey Arroyo received P500,000 from jueteng lords in the region and was now receiving "a monthly allowance."

B2, who said he used to collect from jueteng operators in Central Luzon for distribution to national and regional officials, claimed that Mikey Arroyo asked for P500,000 from regional jueteng operators in 2002 through a certain Tonton, allegedly a son of Bataan Gov. Pablo Roman.

"The governor even issued a check in the amount of P500,000 to supposedly cover Mikey's advance take," B2 said and showed a Bank of Philippine Islands check dated Jan. 24, 2003.

Asked if he had tried cashing the check, B2 said no. "I was told by Toto Ronnie, then the operator in Bataan, that no funds were available for the check."

The INQUIRER also spoke with a jueteng operator (or O1), who said he started paying officials in Metro Manila when Ms Arroyo came to power in 2001.

"[Jueteng operators] never gave money to Metro Manila [officials] during the time of [Corazon] Aquino and [Fidel] Ramos. During [Joseph] Estrada's time, I never operated jueteng because the operations were centralized under [Estrada crony] Atong Ang," said O1, who claimed to have stopped his operations in his province late in 2003 because he planned to run in the 2004 polls.

He was allegedly displaced as jueteng operator by Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda.

"It was only during the Arroyo administration that I started giving money for Metro Manila [officials]," he added.

WITNESSES 1 and 2 explain to TV reporters about "jueteng" operations and payoffs. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Bicol take

B1 said he collected protection money from Art Katigbak, administrator of alleged jueteng lord Alex Tang in Camarines Norte; Zaldy alias Tiger, administrator of alleged jueteng lord Tony Santos in Camarines Sur; and Arvin Liao, administrator of alleged gambling lord Leony Lim in Sorsogon.

He said that he collected an average of P35,000 a week—or P135,000 to P140,000 a month—from the jueteng lords in the three provinces; and that his weekly collections amounted to P7,500 in Camarines Norte, P12,500 in Camarines Sur, and P15,000 in Sorsogon.

B1 said he collected the money every 8th, 16th, 22nd and 30th of the month and delivered the money every following day to Espinosa's apartment.

He said he delivered more than P500,000 to Espinosa before he quit.

"I bring the protection money for Usec (Undersecretary) Espinosa right in the house he is living in with his common-law-wife Lily," B1 said.

According to B1, Espinosa—or his wife when he was not at home—would count the money in his presence and give him P3,000 or more for the delivery.

B1 admitted he had no proof that the protection money he gave Espinosa went to the President's husband.

"It is public knowledge that he is the front man of Mike Arroyo in Bicol. And that is what Usec Espinosa said—[that the money was for the First Gentleman]," B1 said.

Meeting in 2004

B1 said his role started sometime in April 2004 when Espinosa gave him P1,000 for him to invite Katigbak to a meeting.

He said he thought Espinosa had wanted to meet Katigbak to put a stop to jueteng operations.

The meeting was held in B1's house and witnessed by his wife.

At the meeting, Espinosa asked Katigbak to give him the "breakdown or plantilla" of the Bicol jueteng operations, B1 said.

"*Ibigay mo sa akin yan dahil ako ang binigyan ng blessing ni* Attorney Mike Arroyo (Give me the breakdown because I was the one given the blessing of Attorney Mike Arroyo)," B1 quoted Espinosa as saying.

He claimed that Espinosa even said they should raise the protection money if Ms Arroyo won in the election.

B1 said they also met with jueteng administrators in the two other provinces and arranged for the monthly protection money.

The bagman said he would testify at the Senate inquiry because he finally wanted a stop to the illegal numbers game and the corruption it was breeding.

"I am willing to testify because I believe that our First Gentleman Mike Arroyo has a participation in this illegal game of jueteng," he said.

Ledger

B2 also showed a ledger listing jueteng operators' supposed monthly contributions for the allowances of top police officials, allegedly including Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao.

"This is to give you an idea of how much jueteng money is going around," he said.

The ledger showed that as of March 2005, jueteng operators in at least 24 provinces were giving P19.6 million a month to Camp Crame officials through Gener David alias Boy Tangkad and Sr. Supt. Pat Hernandez, said to be assigned at the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

It also showed Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis Singson as the jueteng operator in Abra, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur and La Union, paying P1.93 million monthly.

It named the other local officials operating jueteng as Governors Armando Sanchez of Batangas, Jose Yap of Tarlac, Jesus Typoco Jr. of Camarines Norte, Luis Raymund Villafuerte of Camarines Sur, and Vice Gov. Mariano Cristino Joson of Nueva Ecija.

"The jueteng operators are there because either they are already well-entrenched as natives in their areas or they are close to the powers that be," B2 said.

Also named in the ledger was Bong Pineda of Pampanga, who is supposedly operating jueteng in Pangasinan, Isabela, Pampanga, Batangas, Rizal and Metro Manila, Mindoro and Albay.

Common knowledge

O1 said it was common knowledge among jueteng operators in the regions and provinces that the choice of police regional directors was made by Mike Arroyo, and that the regional officials wanted to please him.

"But I don't have any direct evidence concerning [the First Gentleman and jueteng operations]," O1 said.

He said that from the P9 million he "earned" monthly from jueteng in his province in 2001-2003, at least P1.4 million went to payoffs for national officials (both civilian and police), regional police officers and local officials.

The officials included "all of those in Camp Crame at that time," O1 said, adding:

"We didn't really deal with them directly, but if the protection money didn't really reach them, how come we were able to continue our operations quite easily?"

O1 said among the regional directors to whom he gave money was a ranking police official who was among those expected to take over as PNP chief before Edgar Aglipay retired.

"And if the money didn't reach the local officials in our areas, how come jueteng operations have yet to stop?" he said.

O1 identified Gener David, one of the resource persons whom Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel wanted invited to the inquiry, as the "universal courier" who collected jueteng money for distribution to "Camp Crame, DILG (Department of Interior and Local Governments), Intelligence Group, NBI (national Bureau of Investigation), etc."

Senate inquiry

B1, B2 and O1 would have been present at the Senate inquiry had it been held yesterday as scheduled.

But the inquiry was postponed after Pimentel demanded that Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, chair of the games committee, inhibit himself on grounds of conflict of interest.

According to Pimentel, Lapid cannot possibly conduct a credible hearing because he serves as governor of Pampanga where jueteng is rampant and has confessed to being a friend of Bong Pineda.

But Lapid refused to inhibit himself, and the other senators agreed that the inquiry would be conducted jointly with the public order committee chaired by Sen. Manuel Villar.

Pimentel has listed 24 persons whom he wanted invited to the inquiry, including police officials, governors and jueteng lords.

B1, B2 and O1 are not in Pimentel's list.

But earlier during the discussion of the jueteng inquiry on the floor, Lacson said he knew of potential witnesses whom he identified as Mr. B, Mr. R and Mr. A.

Pimentel's list also includes anonymous witnesses, whom he listed as Mr. X and Mr. Y. *With reports from Carmela Reyes, Ronaldo Dizon and Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Christine O. Avendaño in Manila*

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'Some priests wined, dined by generous jueteng lords'

From page A1

gal numbers racket in their parishes.

Senate Minority Floor Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. has described Pampanga, President Macapagal-Arroyo's home province, as the "Vatican of jueteng" because the racket flourishes there.

The INQUIRER source said a restaurant in San Fernando City offered free meals to Church officials and their companions as "standard operating procedure."

The restaurant is widely known to be owned by one of the two big-time jueteng lords in Pampanga. The gambling lord had the restaurant built after he took over the jueteng operations of his more popular rival.

Free meals

"They [priests] go there regularly and they don't seem to find anything wrong with getting free meals out of jueteng money," the Church official said.

The source said he had personal knowledge that a certain gambling lord had been paying some priests at least P10,000 for every Mass offered for his family.

Unlike politicians or policemen who allegedly pocket jueteng payoffs, however, priests use the "contributions" of gambling lords to build chapels and altars, fund Church activities, sponsor festivals and sports tournaments, or perform works of charity, according to the source.

"This much I can swear: They don't keep the money to themselves, it really goes to their projects," he said.

Fact of life

One such chapel built by jueteng money lies within the City of San Fernando.

"These jueteng lords are very generous benefactors in the Church's building programs," he said. "Some members of the clergy consider receiving jueteng money as a fact of life as if the end justifies the means."

The source said that the unholy alliance between priests and gambling operators had been going since the early 1990s.

The Church official said some priests and gambling lords had established "very close" ties that it had become a practice for a certain jueteng operator to send roast calves whenever a priest celebrated his birthday. Priests would return the favor by "coming in droves" to the jueteng operator's mansion during his birthday.

Loose talk

During the wedding of a prominent politician in the province, the same gambling lord allegedly donated all of the roast calves served at the occasion.

Asked about some priests' involvement in jueteng, Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz yesterday said "it should be stopped if indeed it is happening."

"While admittedly there were some loose talks about this phenomenon, it might be good to ask the archbishop himself," Cruz said, referring to Archbishop Paciano Aniceto of San Fernando.

Cruz has been at the forefront of the campaign to stamp out jueteng. His group, the Krusadang Bayan Laban sa Jueteng, described the illegal numbers racket as a P13-billion-a-year industry.

The jueteng expose of Cruz has spawned allegations that policemen and politicians are on the payroll of gambling lords. *(See banner story on Page A1.)*

Cut red tape, GMA orders

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered all government agencies in the Philippines to cut red tape in order to reduce the costs of doing business and encourage entrepreneurship.

Speaking at a business conference, Ms Arroyo said all government agencies as well as state-owned corporations are "to simplify rules and regulations and reduce reportorial requirements to facilitate doing business and encourage more investments in the country."

Hong Kong's retired chief graft-buster, Tony Kwok, said on Tuesday that he has signed on to a 20-month European Union-funded project to reduce corruption in 16 Philippine government offices by cleaning up the procurement and public works contracts award systems.

The project also includes setting up a help desk for foreign investors and removing corrupt practices at Manila airport's air cargo handling system.

Businessmen have complained that excessive red tape and government requirements cause delays, raise costs and encourages corruption.

Arroyo also cited the need to encourage more entrepreneurs in the Philippines, saying "the new generation ... have the most potential but often suffer the most disillusionment about their future.

"In a free economy like ours, poverty is best alleviated through the development of an environment conducive to the growth of business and entrepreneurship," Ms Arroyo stressed. *AFP*

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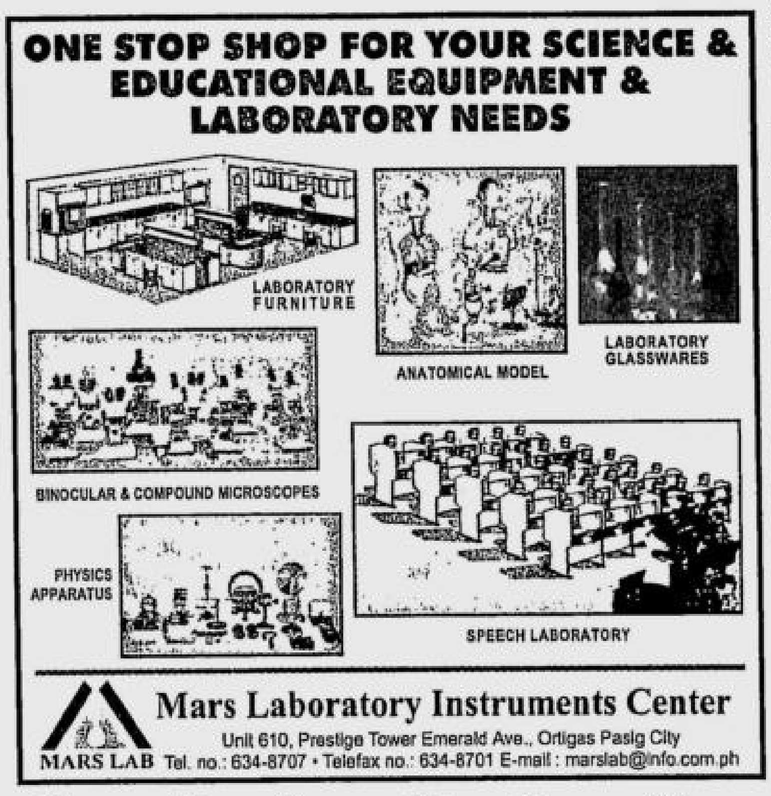

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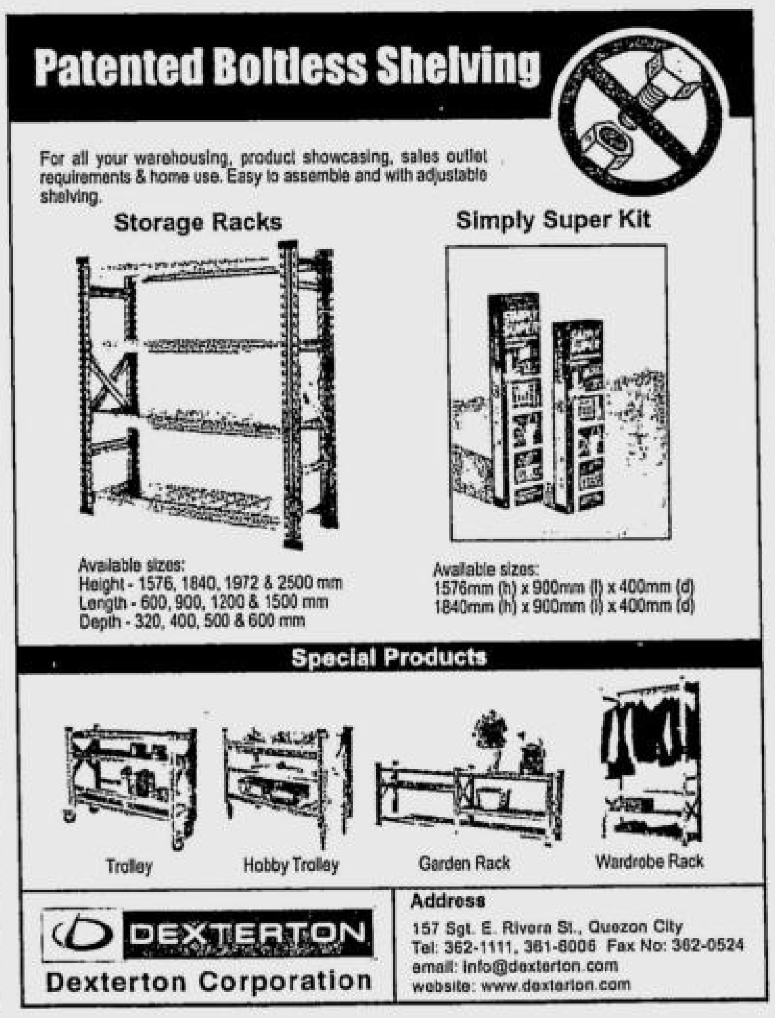

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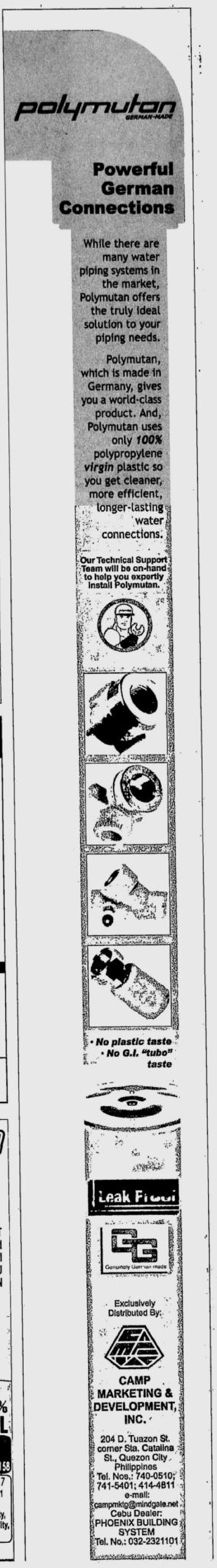

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Newsweek struggles to escape maelstrom

NEW YORK—Newsweek's formal retraction of a story that US interrogators at Guantanamo Bay desecrated the Koran has done little to calm a critical storm unleashed against the magazine on the diplomatic, political and media fronts.

The assault on Newsweek's probity ranged from accusations of shoddy journalism to charges that the weekly had blood on it hands following violent anti-US demonstrations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Condemnation came from the White House, which said the article had damaged the country's image overseas, from the Afghan and Pakistani governments, and from elements of the US press, including some particularly scathing denunciations from Internet-based media.

The intensity of the reaction reflected both the sensitivity of the charge made in the original Newsweek story and the current level of domestic distrust in the mainstream US media following a series of scandals.

Possibly learning from the CBS television network, which was roundly criticized last year for standing by what ultimately proved to be an erroneous report on President George W. Bush's National Guard Service, Newsweek moved swiftly when it's story came under scrutiny.

The magazine issued an apology on Sunday and then, following further criticism from the Bush administration, a formal retraction on Monday.

"They have tried to be transparent," said Lee Wilkins, a professor at the Missouri School of Journalism who specializes in media ethics.

"The minute they knew something was wrong, they said we have these problems with the story... but evidently, these days, that's just not enough," Wilkins said.

A particular problem facing Newsweek's damage limitation strategy was the charge that no apology or retraction could neutralize such a potentially inflammatory report.

The article, carried in the magazine's May 9 issue, quoted an unidentified US official as saying that a probe into allegations of prisoner abuse at Guantanamo found that interrogators had thrown a Koran into a toilet to rattle Muslim prisoners.

Explaining the retraction, Newsweek editor Mark Whitaker said the source had "backed away" from his account.

White House spokesperson Scott McClellan on Tuesday would only welcome the retraction as a "good first step" and insisted Newsweek needed to do more to address the fallout.

The conservative tabloid, the New York Post, devoted its front page to a picture of the offending magazine issue siting in a toilet bowl, below the banner headline "Holy Shiite."

In Afghanistan, President Hamid Karzai's spokesperson Jawed Ludin said the magazine should be held responsible for demonstrations that claimed more than a dozen lives, while Pakistani foreign office spokesperson Jalil Abbas Jilani said the retraction was an admission that Newsweek behaved in an "irresponsible manner."

At home, Jeff Jarvis, who publishes BuzzMachine, an Internet blog that focuses on media issues, slammed the magazine for giving "a terrible lesson in journalism."

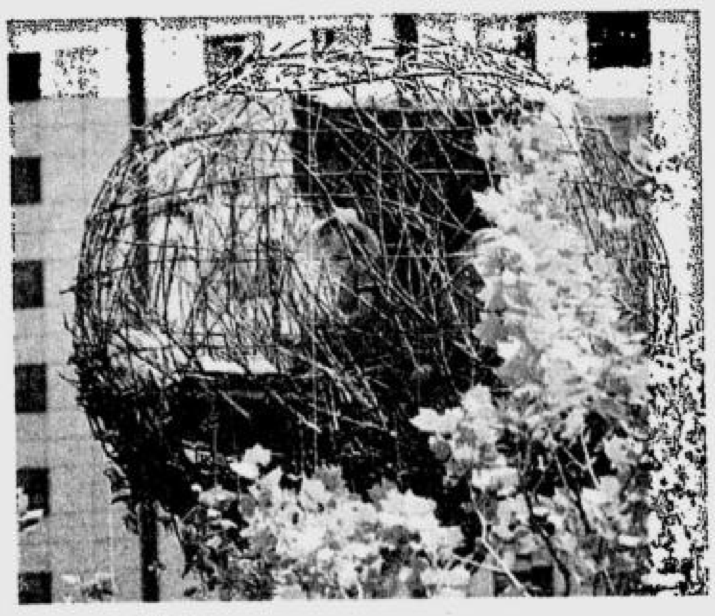
"This mistake cost people their lives... and damaged the already tattered reputation of journalism," Jarvis said.

The row has revived a heated debate about the use of anonymous sources at a time when the US media is under intense pressure to prove its credibility.

Media analysts, while acknowledging the danger of running stories without named sources, argue that the situation is partly of the government's own making.

"When you have an administration that has been as focused on secrecy on as many levels as the Bush administration, it makes it very hard for whistle-blowers to work with journalists and to make this sort of thing public," said Wilkins.

"The cost of going on the record is extraordinarily high at this point," she added. *AFP*



BIRD ARTIST

Chinese artist Ye Fu eats his breakfast in a "bird nest" made of twigs, metal and steel in Beijing's business district. Ye intends to stay in the nest for 30 days, exposed to the elements, as part of an avant-garde art installation. REUTERS

Mag asked to help repair damage to US image

WASHINGTON—The White House called on Newsweek magazine on Tuesday to help repair damage to the US image in the Muslim world from its false report that American interrogators at Guantanamo Bay desecrated the Koran.

Newsweek retracted the report on Monday, saying it could not substantiate a May 9 article contending that an internal military investigation had uncovered Koran abuse. The report said interrogators at the US military prison in Cuba had flushed at least one copy of the Muslim holy book down a toilet to try to make detainees talk.

White House spokesperson Scott McClellan called the retraction a good first step, but said the newsweekly should "help repair the damage that has been done, particularly in the region," by explaining "what happened and why they got it wrong." He offered few specifics.

"They can also talk about policies and practices of the United States military. Our United States military goes out of its way to treat the holy Koran with great care and respect," McClellan said.

But McClellan acknowledged that "it's not my position to get into telling people what they can and cannot report."

The US military's Southern Command, responsible for the prison for foreign terrorism suspects at the naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, began a fact-finding inquiry last week in the aftermath of the Newsweek report.

It is reviewing roughly 31,000 documents such as day-to-day log entries to check whether US personnel at Guantanamo ever threw the Koran in a toilet, but was conducting no interviews as part of the effort, the Pentagon said.

Chief Pentagon spokesperson Lawrence Di Rita did not say when the inquiry would be completed but said it should be soon.

Former Guantanamo prisoners and lawyers for detainees have for months accused US personnel at Guantanamo of putting the Koran into toilets. Di Rita said the Pentagon did not investigate those earlier allegations when they were made because they were not considered credible.

"I'm not aware that we've ever had any specific, credible allegations to investigate. We certainly didn't investigate detainees' lawyers on television saying, 'This is what happened to my detainee,'" Di Rita said.

Asked whether he believed detainees who were making the allegations were lying, Di Rita said, "I think it's very likely. But we haven't investigated them."

With anti-American sentiment already strong in the Muslim world because of the US-led invasion of Iraq and ensuing prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, the report sparked violent protests—in Afghanistan, where 16 were killed and more than 100 injured, Pakistan, Indonesia and Gaza.

In the past week the reported desecration was condemned in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Malaysia and by the Arab League.

America's image had already been tarnished in many parts of the Arab world and Washington has sought to rebuild trust among Muslims as violence continues in Iraq and following last year's disclosures that US guards at Abu Ghraib physically and sexually abused Iraqi prisoners.

Resentment has also simmered among Arabs because of the more than 500 prisoners being held for up to 3-1/2 years at Guantanamo who were captured during the US war in Afghanistan. *Reuters*

Blair presses ahead with ID cards

LONDON—British Prime Minister Tony Blair embarked on his third term and final in office Tuesday with controversial plans for identity cards, a scheme likely to test out his Labor Party's sharply reduced majority in parliament.

The ID card plan was among antiterror and security measures announced by Queen Elizabeth II at the official re-opening of parliament following the May 5 general election, when Blair's Labor Party won reelection.

The monarch, making the traditional government-scripted statement of intent ahead of a parliamentary session, announced a program of roughly 40 planned measures which will form a sizeable part of Blair's final political legacy.

The prime minister, in power since 1997, has promised to step down near the end of his third term, although a series of Labor rebels have called on him to go more quickly, with finance minister Gordon Brown seen as a likely successor.

At the general election, Labor was reelected with a parliamentary majority of 67, comfortable by historic standards but well below the 167 seen at the 2001 election.

The passage of the ID card bill through parliament is likely to be the prime minister's first big challenge in quashing rebelling among rebel Labor MPs keen to take advantage of this newly-reduced margin.

"Legislation will be taken forward to introduce an identity cards scheme," said the monarch, resplendent in crown, heavy ermine robe and full ceremonial jewelry, in the only mention of the plan in the 25-minute address known as the Queen's Speech.

The measure was planned before the election, but met fierce opposition within Labor and was dropped in the days before parliament was dissolved due to lack of time.

ID cards are commonplace in most European countries, but they have never been permanently introduced in Britain, where many citizens fear they would compromise their civil rights.

The measure is officially aimed at combating people fraudulently obtaining state benefits, but is also part of the government's broader fight against terrorism, following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the United States.

Human rights organizations have long condemned the plan, with Shami Chakrabarti, head of the group Liberty, condemning "a Queen's Speech revealing a chronic lack of respect for our democratic traditions." *AFP*

LITTLE KRISHNAS

Children dressed as Lord Krishna parade before participating in the Lord Krishna fancy dress competition on the second day of the three-day Cultural Festival organized by Brhmakumaris at Geet Bhawan in Patiala. AFP

US detains Castro opponent wanted for attacks

CARRILES

MIAMI—US authorities on Tuesday detained a bitter opponent of Cuban leader Fidel Castro who is wanted for plane and hotel bombings in Latin America and who had been seeking asylum in the United States, officials said.

Luis Posada Carriles, 77, was arrested in Miami just hours after Castro led a march by hundreds of thousands of Cubans demanding that the United States extradite the veteran militant, who was for many years a CIA operative.

The Department of Homeland Security said Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents took Posada Carriles into custody and he could be held for 48 hours as part of a review of his immigration status.

A department statement highlighted, however, how the United States does not extradite people to Cuba or "countries believed to be acting on Cuba's behalf."

Posada Carriles has been involved for decades in the battle against Castro's communist revolution.

He took part in the 1961 'Bay of Pigs' US-backed but failed invasion of Cuba. He was later a paid CIA operative for several years, according to declassified US documents.

Posada Carriles is wanted in Venezuela for a 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner off the coast of Barbados in which 73 people died. He was tried once and escaped from prison while awaiting a retrial.

Posada Carriles denies involvement in the bombing but Venezuela on Friday officially asked the United States to arrest and extradite him.

Cuba also wants Posada Carriles for the 1997 bombings of Havana hotels, one of which killed an Italian tourist. He had admitted to plotting the bombings, according to The New York Times, but later recanted the confession.

Posada Carriles was also convicted and sentenced to eight years in prison in Panama for trying to kill Castro at a summit in the central American country in 2000. He was allegedly part of a plan to blow up Castro as he made a speech. He was pardoned in 2004.

He was smuggled into the United States from Mexico on a Greyhound bus in March and requested political asylum, according to associates.

A friend of the Posada Carriles, Santiago Alvarez, said the militant was detained two hours after giving a press conference to selected reporters in Miami.

He told reporters: "I've lived for 30 years in the clandestine world. If my application for asylum causes the United States problems, I will withdraw it." *AFP*

North, South Korea nuke talks still in stalemate

SEOUL—South and North Korea on Wednesday extended senior-level talks over the North's nuclear program after a two-day meeting ended in stalemate over whether Pyongyang would return to six-way negotiations.

The talks, which were scheduled to end on Tuesday, continued into early Wednesday but made no breakthrough. The talks will resume on Thursday.

"South and North Korea have had sincere talks in the past two days but failed to reach an agreement," Rhee Bong-jo, Seoul's chief delegate, said after the talks held overnight in the North Korean town of Kaesong overnight, according to pool reports.

"Talks will resume on May 19 to wrap up the consultations." The talks got bogged down after North Korea sidestepped a new proposal from South Korea to jump-start the six-nation negotiations, according to Seoul officials.

Rhee on Monday made what he described as an "important offer" to entice Pyongyang back to the six-way talks.

But North Korean delegates on Tuesday continued to snub the South Korea call, reiterating that they would pass Seoul's position to government agencies.

"We made it clear that North Korea's nuclear weapons cannot be tolerated, and inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation would be impossible without the 'nuclear-free Korean peninsula' principle," Rhee was quoted as saying.

"We repeatedly stressed the nuclear issue should be resolved for the nation's stability and prosperity, and for its sake, six-way talks should resume as early as possible and make substantial progress."

The South Korean team led by Rhee headed back to Seoul for consultations with the government ahead of Thursday's talks. *AFP*

Negotiator says Australian hostage may soon be freed

SYDNEY—An Australian Muslim leader has raised hopes that Islamic militants in Iraq could soon free Australian hostage Douglas Wood, saying he has received the news in a phone call from an unidentified man claiming to represent the kidnappers.

Sheikh Taj Eldin Al Hilali, who flew to Iraq to try to negotiate the contractor's release, has told Australia's SBS Arabic radio that the caller expressed willingness to free Wood—possibly within 24 hours—but not two Iraqi hostages.

SBS radio journalist Majida Abboud-Saab said she spoke to the sheikh early Wednesday and he told her of the conversation with the alleged representative of the abductors. It was not clear when that conversation took place.

"They said that they were willing to release Douglas Wood, however, they are not willing to release the other two Iraqis," Abboud-Saab said.

"They are not placing any conditions on his release.

"He (Sheikh Al Hilali) is very convinced and he is very optimistic and he is very happy about the fact that they have agreed to release Douglas.

"But he is very upset about the fact that the other two Iraqis are not going to be released."

A spokesperson for Sydney's Muslim community said the sheikh had handed over vital medication to be delivered to Wood's captors.

"The strongest bit of news that we have at the moment is that the medication has changed hands, the mufti (Al Hilali) has given this medication to be taken to Mr. Wood and this is a very good sign," Keysar Trad told Sky News.

"All the comments, all the gestures, all the signals he (Al Hilali) is receiving from the community leaders, from the tribal elders, from virtually everyone he's coming across is that he will not be allowed to return empty-handed."

Prime Minister John Howard expressed cautious optimism at the reports.

"We have to treat this with a bit of caution," he said.

"We would all hope that it's right but we would also be aware in a situation like this there always people who may represent things—I don't mean the sheikh—others who may be representing to him things that are not correct."

Abboud-Saab said the sheikh would now extend his stay in Iraq indefinitely instead of returning to Australia as planned this week. AFP

Uzbek gov't admits to 169 deaths, but pressure growing

ANDIJAN, Uzbekistan—Uzbekistan's hardline government dramatically increased its estimated death toll Tuesday from a bloody crackdown in the eastern city of Andijan, as international pressure grew on President Islam Karimov.

Prosecutor general Rashid Kadyrov conceded that the toll was 169—far higher than a previous official estimate of about 30 and still a long way below most independent accounts, including one from opposition activists of 745.

As the United States and the European Union joined Britain in urging Karimov to show restraint, a small group of opposition protestors held a rare demonstration outside the US Embassy in the capital Tashkent.

Andijan itself was mostly calm, but still tense following sporadic gunfire during the night and a continuing heavy military presence.

The Free Farmers, one of the few opposition groups in the autocratic Central Asian ex-Soviet republic, announced that a detailed survey in Andijan revealed a significantly higher death toll than previously feared.

"We started house-to-house checks two days ago and this figure of 745 was for yesterday (Monday). Today we're checking again and it might be more," the party's leader Nigara Hidoyatova said.

Witnesses say that most of the bloodshed in Andijan on Friday happened when troops—sent to subdue a group of gunmen who had stormed the local prison and taken over several public buildings—sprayed gunfire into crowds of demonstrators.

Uzbek officials say the scale of the violence was much lower and that most of those killed were the gunmen, whom they describe as Islamic revolutionaries.

Karimov, a former Soviet leader of Uzbekistan and iron-fisted ruler there since independence in 1991, said a "massive campaign" was under way in the Western media to discredit his government.

Karimov also repeated denials that his forces had shot at unarmed demonstrators—something witnessed by an AFP reporter and many witnesses. "No government in the world would shoot on peaceful demonstrators," he said.

US and Russia fears of instability in mostly Muslim Central Asia mean that criticism of Karimov has generally been muted. Karimov is also considered a valuable ally in Washington because he allowed the use of a major air base for operations across the border in Afghanistan. *AFP*

US military eyes space; opponents urge caution

WARRENTON, Va.—US efforts to deploy weapons in space face major technical, budgetary and physical barriers, opponents warned this week, but military planners still have high hopes for the "high ground" of future wars.

Everett Dolman, a professor at the Air Force's School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, said he expected the White House to issue a new space policy next month that would underscore the military's determination to protect its existing space assets and maintain dominance of outer space.

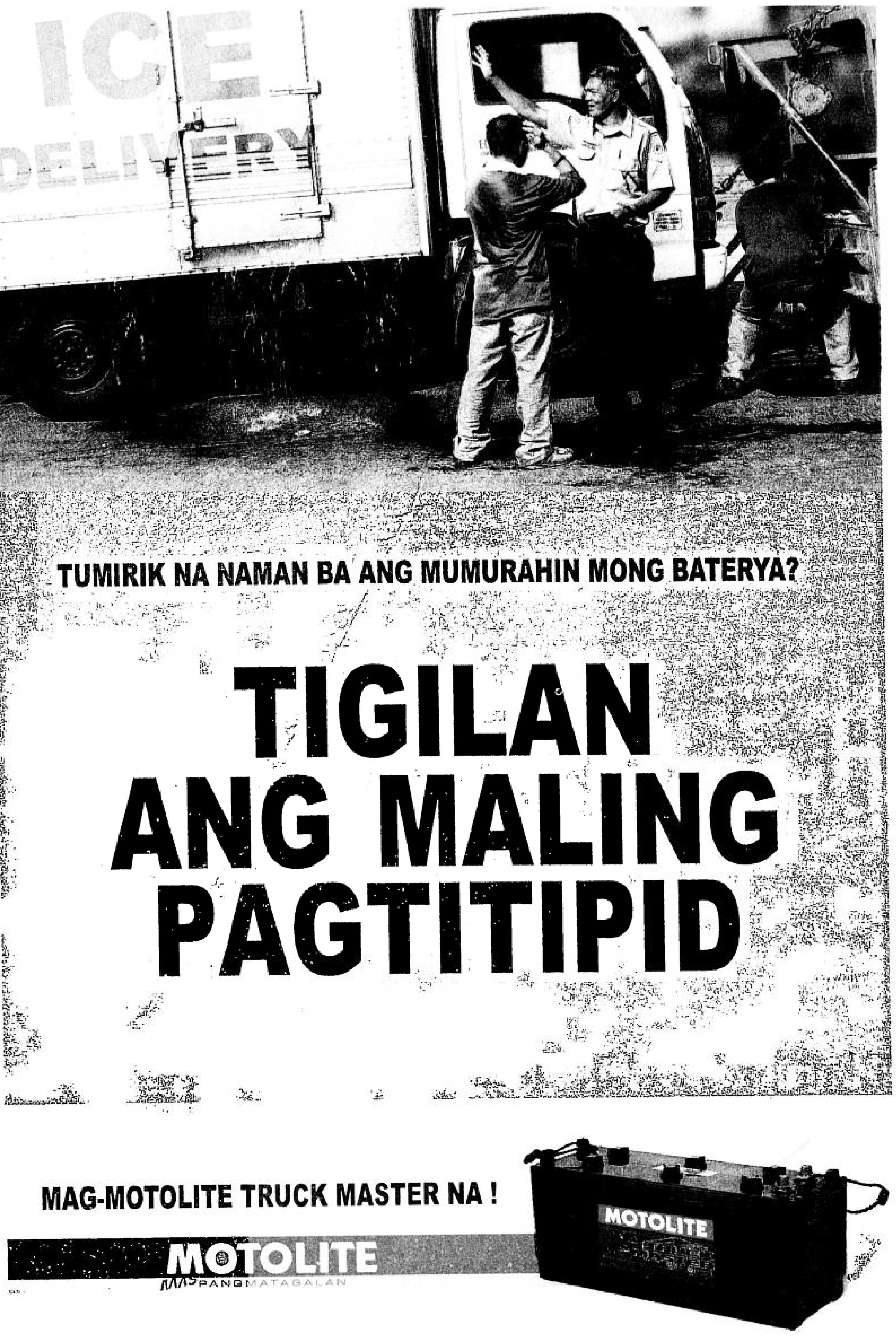
Space was essential to how the US military fights wars, Dolman said, noting that satellites already helped relay communications among troops, provided intelligence and targeting data, and guided bombs to their destinations.

"We've crossed the threshold and we simply cannot step back," Dolman, a proponent of space weapons, said at a two-day Nuclear Policy Research Institute conference.

Dolman said the critical question was not whether the United States should weaponize space, but whether it could afford to allow other states to get a jump-start in this area.

He said work on several technologies—including work on microsatellites that could be launched to target enemy satellites and satellite-jamming systems—was far enough along that it could be declared operational within 18 months.

Antinuclear activist Helen Caldicott organized the conference about 50 miles outside Washington to discuss what she described as dangerous moves that could spark a new arms race in space, as well as jeopardizing weather forecasting, communications satellites and other peaceful uses of space. *Reuters*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Yukos founder guilty of fraud

MOSCOW—Yukos oil baron Mikhail Khodorkovsky was convicted of fraud Tuesday, but was left waiting for a verdict on 10 other counts as the court dragged out the controversial trial of Russia's onetime richest man.

KHODORKOVSKY

The verdict, which concerned the acquisition of a 44-percent stake in an agricultural institute by Khodorkovsky and business partner Platon Lebedev, appeared to confirm the widely expected outcome—that the two Yukos founders will be found guilty in the epic fraud and tax evasion trial.

Following the decision, Yelena Lipster, a lawyer for Lebedev, told journalists the two men had no chance of being found not guilty of the other charges, saying: "We can only speculate on what sentence will be handed down."

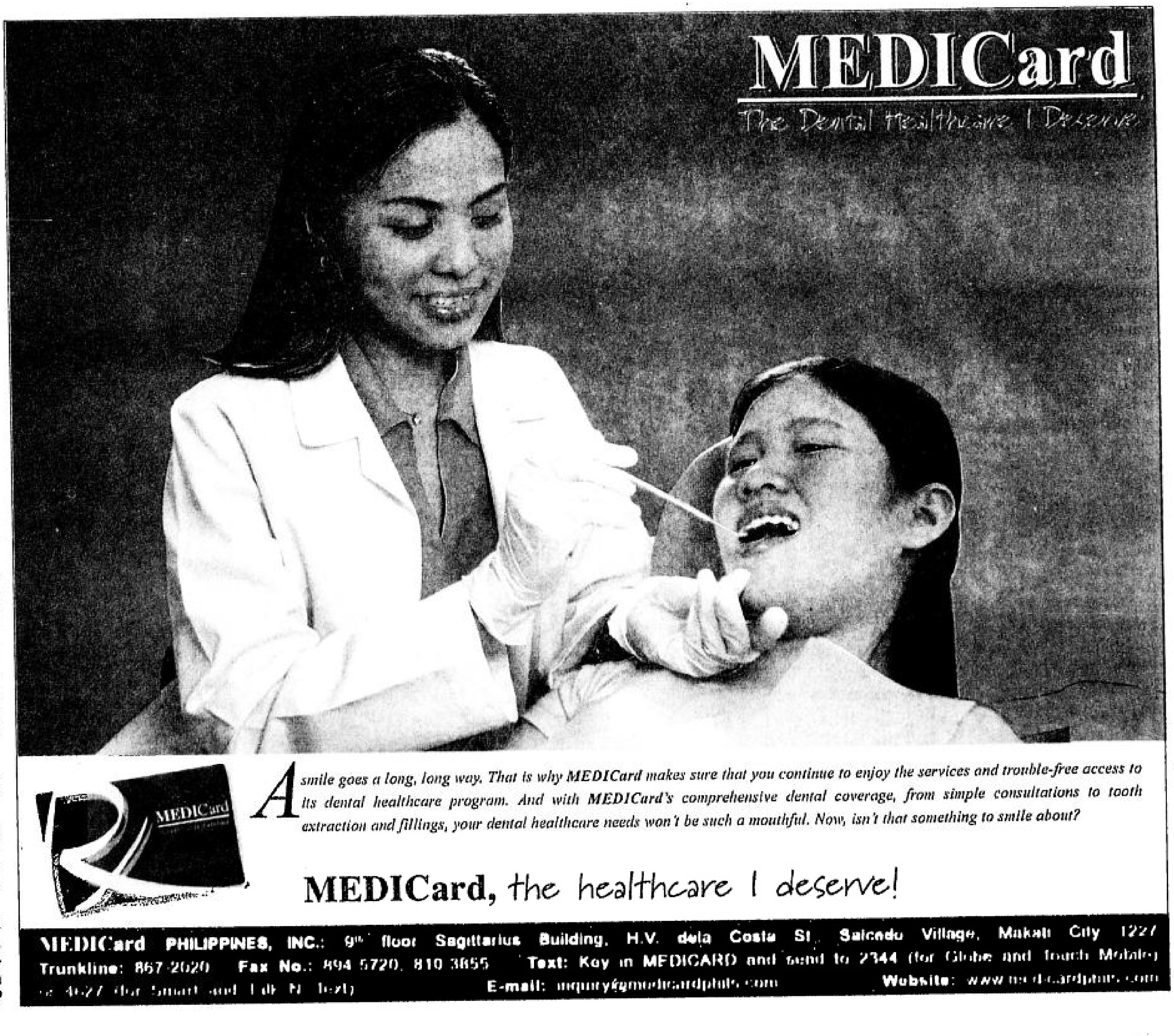
But verdicts on the remaining counts had yet to be announced, meaning that the denouement of the 11-month trial, which has badly damaged Russia's image abroad and become a major political issue at home, was set to drag on.

"What is important from our point of view is the signal sent to the business and investor community," said a spokesperson for EU external relations commissioner Benita Ferrera-Waldner.

"What's important to us is that there is a transparent and non-discriminatory framework for business to invest in Russia," she added.

And the Council of Europe's pointwoman on the Khodorkovsky case, Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, said "the judgment in this ongoing trial ... is a sign of the uncertainty of justice for foreign countries and for investors."

The prosecution has asked for a maximum sentence of 10 years for Khodorkovsky, 41, and Lebedev, 46, who are charged under seven articles of the Russian criminal code. Both men deny all charges. *AFP*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Action words

Editorials

SHORTLY after launching its much-publicized Run After Tax Evaders (RATE) campaign, the Bureau of Internal Revenue has emerged with a record collection of P62 billion for the month of April.

"This is one of the highest growth rates we've seen so far…a source of great optimism," President Macapagal-Arroyo exulted at a command conference held at the BIR main office early this week.

April, specifically its 15th day, also saw a record collection in a single day of P21.34 billion, an amount that was 43.4 percent higher than the P14.77 billion collected on the same day last year. Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno said the significant improvement in the agency's collection performance could be due to the people's higher awareness of their tax obligations as generated by RATE.

However, private economic analysts were generally restrained in their praises. "I don't think it will be a very big surplus," David Cohen of Action Economics in Singapore said. "It's still early days."

Parayno certainly deserves credit for making true his words on RATE. When the campaign was launched in March, he vowed that the BIR would "not really care" who it was going after. "Once we have the evidence, we will file the case [even if it involves] the highest official of the land. No exception. I tell you this: The bigger the better."

The program raised eyebrows because of its ambitious target of filing cases against affluent tax evaders every week. It looked ambitious not so much because of its target frequency but because of the promise to hale to court powerful and influential personalities. Before RATE, it was considered a remarkable year if one single case was filed against a rich tax evader. But after seven weeks, the BIR has filed under RATE 16 cases against big companies (i.e., Philippine Telephone and Telegraph Corp.) and big names (movie star Richard Gomez, singer Regine Velasquez, professional basketball player Paul Asi Taulava).

In an officialdom that overflows with empty words, Parayno has shown us the meaning of action.

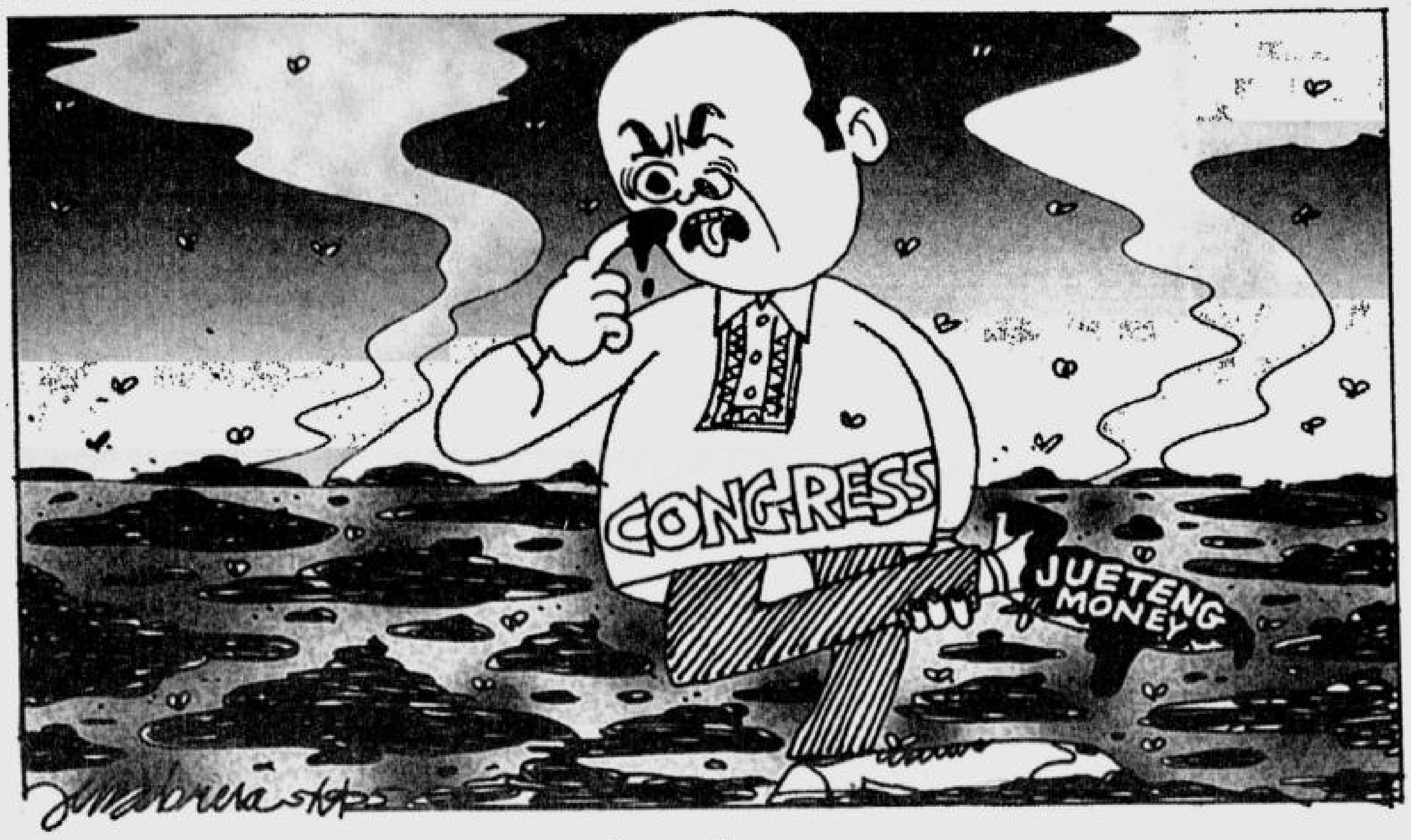
More action

THE INITIAL success of RATE should make it a little easier for Filipino taxpayers to swallow the bitter pill of higher taxes being prescribed by the country's economic managers to stave off a financial crisis. While big income earners were getting away with token income tax payments, it seemed oppressive to make those who were honestly paying their taxes from their meager incomes as employees cough up some more. Now that some prominent personalities are being charged in court, at least ordinary taxpayers can say that the burden of saving the economy is being shared.

Parayno is moving in the right direction and his initial success should strengthen his resolve to cast a wider net with RATE. But for the program to yield the kind of results it is supposed to achieve, the BIR would need the full cooperation of other government agencies. The Department of Justice, a key agency in the prosecution of tax evasion cases, has said it would form a 20-strong task force, composed of lawyers, to support RATE. The Department of Finance, the BIR's mother agency, has been very supportive of RATE.

The only fly in the ointment seems to be Parayno's own reluctance to take on politicians. He has explained why governors, senators and representatives are not priority targets by saying that "they are government officials…and because of the withholding system, automatically taxes are withheld by our employer, which is the government." The fact, however, is that most politicians also own private businesses, although many of them are registered in the names of trusted relatives. If lifestyle checks were to be made on these politicians, many would be hard put to explain how they were able to acquire their lavish mansions and flashy cars on the salaries and allowances they get from the government.

If Parayno really means business, he can do better than just going after big names in the world of entertainment or sports. There are bigger fish in business and politics, and some of them can be caught through their mouths. The prime example is Jose Pidal, who claimed ownership of hundreds of millions in bank deposits but whose tax payment for one year was less than that of a humble public school teacher.



Band-Aid strategy

Viewpoint

Juan L. Mercado

"DIG the well before you get thirsty," the old Chinese proverb cautions.

This year's El Niño has left parched fields and restive queues of thirsty people have swollen. In 24 out of 30 mountain barangays in Cebu City, for example, fights have broken out.

"As the temperature soars, so do tempers," Sun-Star's Rene H. Martel writes. The fury increased as three decrepit tankers broke down, in a city paying P1.5 million daily for its yen debts. Water-short, impoverished residents fork out P35 per container.

Yet, "water wars" are not new. They erupt whenever weather aberrations, like El Niño or La Niña, reappear. These are bodies of warmer-than-normal water in the Pacific. They can be one-and-a-half times larger than the United States. When trade winds abate, these waters along equatorial Pacific expand, washing up to as far as Peru and Ecuador. They disturb rainfall patterns and droughts can result.

Last September, rainfall in the northern half of Luzon was below average and the southwest monsoon petered out early, the weather bureau noted. An El Niño could affect food-producing provinces, specially in Central Visayas and the western half of Mindanao. Did we take heed?

Not at all, since we labor under the myth that we're a water-rich country. But internal freshwater resources here is 4,476 liters per head, the World Resources Institute notes. Malaysians have 21,259 liters and Burmese 22,219.

We're not yet what hydrologists dub "water-stressed." That label is pinned on when annual supplies slip below 2,740 liters. Water shortages then cripple production, prevent renewal of aquifers, etc. Today, 26 nations, mostly in Subsaharan Africa, fall in this category.

But we have little to spare. "Between 20 to 40 liters per head per day is the minimum needed for drinking, bathing, cooking and sanitation," the Pacific Institute for Development Studies estimates.

In Lanao del Sur, 7 out of every 10 residents lack access to improved water sources, the Philippine Human Development Report points out. That's a fraction higher than Masbate's 63 percent and Guimaras' 56. (In contrast, only 3.5 percent of Mountain Province folk are cut off from unsafe water.)

Reaction to drought, as Cebu demonstrates, tends to be ad-hoc: from pious declarations of state of calamity to hurried purchase of pumps, etc. Officials dust off plans for water catchments, which had been shelved when El Niño eased in 2003.

This is Band-Aid strategy. And it locks communities into what experts call the "zero-sum game of water management." That's when "government increases supply to one user by taking it away from another," Worldwatch Institute explains.

In this "game," supplies are not increased by tapping new sources. Nor are they augmented by effective conservation. So, farms, industries, etc. scramble for stagnant volumes as water tables fall and rivers shrink.

"Whiskey's for drinkin'," Mark Twain observed. "But water is for fightin' over."

The brawls confront complacent officials with the truth: There is no substitute for water.

Water is also a limited resource. There is not more water in a Philippines of 84 million people than when its population was 19 million in 1940.

"On the watershed level, the forest cover varies from almost none to 50 percent, " notes the Food and Agriculture Organization report on "Sustainable Forest Management" in the Philippines.

Thus, Cebu Rep. Eduardo Gullas recently filed a bill that seeks to consolidate the management of Metro Cebu's five protected areas. These watersheds have been infiltrated by carpetbaggers. There were 8,994 claimants waving tax declarations for 12,987 parcels in protected areas. Official complicity stoked that influx.

Yet, simple, low-cost technology has long been available. With over 6,000 years of agricultural experience, China built "melons on long stems"—a network of village reservoirs. In Bali, farmers irrigated their rice farms over the last 500 years with inexpensive loose-stone dams and weirs.

Rain tanks, recycling, low-flush toilets, sealing leaks and lining irrigation channels are not "minor add-ons." They can conserve substantial volumes.

The key is "more bang for the buck." As water becomes scarce, progress hinges on wringing more value out of each liter used "while ensuring enough is left to keep ecosystems functioning."

This underscores the essential second track to supplement just casting about for new supplies: conservation. We must use less. And what is saved must be shared.

Cardinal Ricardo Vidal has issued a circular reminding people that in 2003, the Holy See issued a message declaring that "both men and women should be involved and have equal voice in managing water resources and sharing of the benefits that come from sustainable water use." Wasting water is reprehensible.

From Mar del Plata in Argentina in 1977, Dublin in 1992 to Kyoto in 1997, all conferences warn of conflicts ahead if decisive reforms are put off.

There is an ethical dimension to this. "It is a grave moral shortcoming that 1.2 billion people cannot drink water without courting disease or death," the Last Oasis asserts.

Today's water brawls are a dress rehearsal for what continued complacency invites. Given the overpumping on its limited aquifers, "by 2010, Cebu could face water riots," the prestigious Water Resources Center at San Carlos University warns. Thus, an ecological imperative to conserve or wither is seen for what it is: an issue of values.

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

More breathtaking imbecility

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

COMES now Sr. Supt. Bienvenido Latag of Davao Oriental accusing journalists in his area of protecting gambling lords. It's not the cops who are conniving with gambling lords, as media charge, he says, it's the other way around. It's the media that are doing so. "Media men are in cahoots with illegal gambling operators. They help gambling lords in discrediting the police, especially when raids are conducted. That is the reason the gambling financiers have no fear—because of the support they get from media men."

He did not name the erring media men.

I do not know the peace-and-order situation in Davao Oriental. Maybe Latag is telling the truth, though the fact that he refuses to name names can't greatly help his cause. What has he got to be afraid of? No cop, officer or rank-and-file, has yet been murdered in this country for accusing a journalist of coddling a drug or *jueteng* lord. And his point rather pushes the concept of "the pen is mightier than the sword" to extreme lengths, suggesting as it does that gambling lords would rather bribe journalists than cops to promote their operations. No *jueteng* lord has yet been deterred in his enterprise by media exposé, not even those made by bishops in the media. They have been deterred by resolute police action.

I leave the media and various institutions in Davao to ferret out the truth. I must say, however, that the timing of Latag's allegation sucks. It comes at a time when no less than the interior secretary suggests that journalists themselves are to blame for being killed in this country. That is so presumably because most of them do not really deserve to be called journalists. Most of them, he says, were killed for reasons that had nothing do with their self-professed profession. They were killed for their extra-curricular activities, which had to do with self-gain. Latag's allegation contributes to that idea, and was very likely made with that in mind. The dead journalists deserved their fate.

It's a vicious thought, and one we may not let pass. They are not alone to suggest so. Only a few weeks ago, several representatives proposed that tougher libel bills be passed to stop the killings. "The murders of the journalists," they opined, "could be due to Filipinos being sensitive to criticisms and the country's libel laws being ineffective." Tougher libel laws would make media more responsible and therefore reduce the killings.

I am glad that Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano spoke out against it, saying it was a move to curtail press freedom in this country. But it's clearly more than that. It is a move to curtail sanity in this country. Can any idea be more idiotic?

If we Filipinos are sensitive to criticism, then we shouldn't have a democracy at all. We shouldn't have a free press, we should have a PR press, or the kind that flourished during martial law, where the Daily Express and other newspapers routinely dished out narcotic praises to government officials. But it's hard to buy the congressmen's premise, as it is. The problem, as far as public officials in particular are concerned—representatives at the head of them—is not that they are onion-skinned, it is that they have thick hides. Representatives for one no longer bother to hide their rapacity in bleeding this country dry with pork barrel while the children forage in garbage dumps with snot on their faces.

I have not seen any public official today look particularly embarrassed at being called a crook. In pre-martial law times at least, public officials bristled at being called *buaya*, which was an insult to crocodiles. Today, they just flash their TV smiles, and out of whim or having nothing to do send out their boys to practice target-shooting on journalists.

But can anything be more idiotic than to put the burden of proof on journalists on why they should **not** be killed? Can anything be more insane than to suggest that the murder of journalists is perfectly understandable, if not justifiable, journalists being guilty of offending the tender sensibilities of fellow Filipinos?

I know the media are prone to abuse. I know that some journalists, if not many of them, are on the take, like to exaggerate, sensationalize, or downright lie, and demolish all ethics altogether by being in media and government at the same time. I know that in the provinces, in particular, journalists are often barely literate, tend to be partisan and supplement their pay, if they get any (many radio commentators do their commentating for free, getting their remuneration elsewhere), by accepting cash or kind from benefactors.

That is not, and can never be, a reason for people in media to be murdered.

The solution to a bad media is to make it a good one, not to make it a dead one. By all means let us shout our heads off about the abuses of media. By all means let us criticize reporters and commentators for being wrong about their reports and comments. But let us not allow one hair of journalists to be harmed. The natural order of things, at least in a democracy, is not for journalists to explain to us why they should not be killed. It is for government officials to explain to us why they are being killed. The natural order of things, at least in a democracy, is not for government officials to find anthropological reasons why Filipino journalists are understandably murdered. It is for government officials to find their murderers and prove to us why they should not be fired for failing to do so.

Filipinos are sensitive and understandably likely to murder those who insult them? Then they should be free to murder the representatives who insult their intelligence, the thugs in barong Tagalog who insult their freedoms, and the inhabitants of Malacañang who insult their very existence.

Pinoys in SA never lost their patriotism

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

JOHANNESBURG—We left the Cape Peninsula a week ago and began driving eastward toward Johannesburg, South Africa's biggest and most industrial city. That's a distance of over 1,700 km, which we broke up with several overnight stops. From Cape Town, we drove along the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, passing through charming little towns in the Cape Peninsula that have the inimitable ambience of bay resort towns. But before leaving the Cape Peninsula, we visited some very famous South African wineries south of Cape Town, which grew around towns like Franchoek, to where the French Hugeunots escaped persecution in the late 1700s, and Stellenbosch, a beautiful university town built up by Afrikaner settlers.

From the Cape Peninsula, we drove by the coast of the Indian Ocean, and climbed up through gorgeous velvet-like mountain ranges and valleys planted to wheat or grazing lands, and later sugar plantations for as far as the eye can see. We stayed in what's called "self-catering apartments," which are quite inexpensive, clean and comfortable and where one can cook meals and sometimes enjoy the company of a dog that can walk with you in the forests.

The high point of this part of out trip was a visit to the Drackensburg Mountains, which means "dragon mountain," whose magnificent craggy rock formations were declared a World Heritage Site by Unesco. En route to Johannesburg, we made a detour to Rourke's Drift, a little town deep in the heart of what's known till now as "Zululand." This place was made famous by the battle to the death between 4,000 fierce Zulu warriors and 139 intrepid British officers and soldiers defending a lonely outpost in 1879. This battle was made into a gripping movie that made Michael Caine a star. That battle also has the distinction of earning for the British soldiers who took part in it the biggest number of Victoria Crosses ever for a single battle in British military history.

* * *

Earlier I wrote about the Filipino fishermen who escaped to Kalk Bay in the late 1800s, reviving that coastal town which was badly in decline. These Filipinos were either deserters from ships that were en route to Spain, enticed by their fellow Filipinos to try their luck at Kalk Bay, or political exiles fleeing after the Cavite Mutiny of 1872. Today, Filipino surnames still abound in the place. Curiously, the strengths and the weaknesses we see in our people today were evident in the Pinoys who settled in Kalk Bay 150 years ago.

* * *

As Michael Walker noted in the book, "Kalk Bay, A Place of Character," despite their reputation as the best rock fishermen in the area, the Filipinos had a hard time making ends meet due to the seasonal catch and diseases they faced in winter. Moreover, they had to pay the equivalent of today's "boundary" for the boats.

Walker noted that drinking and rowdy behavior became a problem among Filipinos, called the "Manillas," and hangers-on especially in the crowded areas where they lived. But two churchmen worked hard to pull them together. One was a Catholic priest, Father Duigman, who ministered to them from 1874 to 1925 in a language they understood, Spanish. Burial services became important occasions for the Pinoys, who had a church and burial ground allotted for them by the local government. Walker noted that the Filipinos attended funerals "in solemn dignity, wearing black suits, silk top hats, starched shirts and white gloves." Weddings were equally important occasions. A great disciplinarian, the priest insisted on 100-percent attendance at Mass. "He carried a sjambok known as 'nagslang' and stragglers (at Mass) were quick to learn the penalty for dawdling or laziness."

On the other hand, Archdeacon Richard Brooke administered the Kalk Bay community from 1901 to 1922, and filed many petitions in behalf of the fishermen. In times of disasters, he organized relief for the families of those who drowned. Both men were heroic in their help for those affected by the great flu epidemic of 1918.

* * *

Walker cites an article in an old newspaper, the Natal Mercury, written by a visitor in 1880 about the Filipino fishermen: "They were a polyglot crowd and we marveled at the babel of tongues, all wagging at once and to no purpose, it would appear, for as far as we could discover, nobody was paying the least attention to what anyone else was saying but himself."

Another author noted how, nearly 80 years after the Filipinos first settled there, their "unique vocabulary" was still prevalent. He also observed that while the Filipinos were "a colourful, lovable people," they also became "proficient in the use of the knife." And while this skill was useful to them in fishing, it also led to a lot of stabbings when they fought among themselves.

A Kalk Bay mayor named Gourlay, on the other hand, described them in 1906 as "a discontented grumbling race of men from beginning to end and when they had nothing to quarrel about, they quarreled with each other."

* * *

But for all their weaknesses, noted Walker, the love of the Filipino fishermen for their homeland was never forgotten, and the Philippine flag flew on many occasions. As late as 1960, nearly 80 years after their arrival, the families of these early Filipinos contributed to the maintenance of a hospital in Manila. This could be gleaned from the plaques on some hospital beds that read, "Donated by the descendants and friends of the original settlers of Kalk Bay, South Africa."

After Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States in 1898, many of the Filipinos returned to their homeland, leaving no more than 40 families in Kalk Bay. But those who remained multiplied quickly, with some couples having 10 to 15 children. To this day, their deeds are still recalled every so often in that part of South Africa.

'Just tell me why'

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

IT was a small news item in the INQUIRER's The World section two days ago, datelined Enniskillen, Northern Ireland, and written by the Associated Press' Paul Majendie. The section editor gave it a longish headline that ran across the entire page: "Just tell me why you did it, grieving father asks IRA bomber." I found myself reading the story again and again. Page A10, if you wish to read it.

The article was very short but powerful. Not weepy at all, except the last small paragraph where the dam broke. Something about the story sounded very familiar, very universal, very primal. Was it the pain, was it the senselessness, was it the wound that would not heal?

"After 25 years of grieving, John Maxwell dearly wants to ask the IRA bomber who killed his teenage son a simple question: 'Why did you do it?'

"Only when he knows the answer can he bury the ghosts from one of the most notorious Irish Republican Army attacks in its 30-year fight to oust Britain from Northern Ireland.

"Maxwell's 15-year-old son Paul was the boatboy for Queen Elizabeth's cousin Lord Louis Mountbatten. Both were killed in 1979 when an IRA bomb exploded on board shortly after they set sail from the fishing village of Mullaghmore…"

Yes, I do remember Mountbatten—that dashing viceroy to India in the dying days of the British raj played by Peter O'Toole in the movie "Gandhi"—being killed. I do not remember the young teenager who was also killed in the bombing. But his father would never ever forget. It has stayed in his heart, in his mind, in that cold dark depth where few could enter.

The story said that under the terms of the 1998 Good Friday accord that brought an uneasy peace to Northern Ireland, hard-line prisoners were released early from jail. Among them was Thomas McMahon, the bomber who killed Maxwell's son and three others. He was freed in 1998.

Maxwell, 68, a retired school teacher, said of the bomber who scarred his life: "I would want to meet him. If there is any sign that we share a common humanity, it would be worth it."

He added: "If he could come halfway toward seeing my point of view, it would be worthwhile."

The story said that it took Maxwell 18 years to pluck up the courage to see a psychotherapist and relive that nightmarish day when his son ended up in the wrong place at the wrong time.

"It was unfinished business," Maxwell said. "I was holding it all in. I cried for two hours. That was the big turning point for me."

Maxwell could very well be a Filipino, a universal Everyman or Everyvictim of senseless violence.

You never know. You walk the streets on blistering, hot days or on wet, soggy nights and you never know who among the people you meet are grieving the loss of loved ones or are carrying the unhealed wounds from some hideous crime done to their person. The walking wounded, if you pardon the cliché, we will always have with us and they have been growing in number lately.

You watch courtroom proceedings where those accused of heinous crimes are sentenced and it is not only the convicts and their families that let out primal screams. The victims and their families who are, at last, supposedly getting justice weep and gnash their teeth just as hard, saying that nothing, but nothing, could ever take away the pain.

The lesson, they say, is "for the others" that they may not commit the same crime. Their victory is "for the others," that they may not suffer the same. As for themselves, they could only hope that some normalcy (it is hard for them to pronounce the word joy) would creep back into their lives.

I think of these things, during these oppressive summer days when we constantly look up to the heavens to beg for the relief of rain, even acid-laced rain, to cool our heated brows. I think of all these as I see the images of those who are crushed, those whose hopes are dashed.

Rape survivor Karen Vertido is holding her head high because some other kind of justice, not necessarily legal justice, and the wave of support from women will carry her far. She is not defeated and she will not be alone.

Journalists are being murdered one after another. In some dark alleys or inside public vehicles, helpless, hard-working citizens are being robbed of their meager possessions. There is no sense in killing someone for a cell phone or a wallet.

The small-time felons always say they did not mean to kill but, uh, things got out of hand. Ows? And what about those who, in the name of ideology, planted bombs in the LRT, buses, the marketplaces, malls, piers, the ferries, harming those who knew nothing about causes? What about those who kidnapped and killed their prey, those who maimed and beat the life out of those they wanted to be their "brod"? Brod *daw*. Ask the mother of frat neophyte Lenny Villa what it is like to lose a son.

"*Sana maramdaman mo rin*" (I hope you get to feel what it is like) is the tearful refrain of those who will be hurting all their lives. As if that would make the pain subside.

There is, at some point, a need on the part of victims and survivors to confront the ghosts and the demons. In the case of Maxwell, it is not so much to say to the bomber, "Behold what you have done." Maybe it is not even to get an answer to "Why did you do it?" for Maxwell might get the plainest reply.

Suddenly I think of Pope John Paul II meeting with his assassin Mehmet Ali Agca in prison. That kind. But you don't do that with a cell phone snatcher who killed.

To look into each other's eyes, to stand on the same ground at last, and together to behold the evil that was done and also the good that might yet be. Maxwell has been waiting more than 20 years for the moment. I hope it comes.

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Recognition by the nation

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

COURTESY of Philippine Ambassador to Washington, D.C., Albert del Rosario, I was able to attend yesterday's formal ceremony in the Philippine Embassy during which the four Frieder brothers, who took it upon themselves to lobby for the Philippines to offer refuge to Jews persecuted by the Nazis, were posthumously honored. The Order of Lakandula was also conferred on Racelle Weiman, director for the Center for Holocaust and Humanity Education in Cincinnati, Ohio, who did so much to honor the Philippines for what it did, and Frank Ephraim, whose book on the Jewish refugees in the Philippines brought the story to the attention of the world. Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo represented President Macapagal-Arroyo.

I have a special affection for the Order of Lakandula, because it was my responsibility, while working for the President, to not only draft and shepherd through the approval process, the Honors Code of the Philippines but also to draft the criteria for the Order of Lakandula, established by that EO, and even attend to the design and manufacture of the Order of Lakandula. The esthetic considerations I bore in mind involved the need to come up with an authentically Filipino design, and one, in particular, suitable for Muslims, as the Order might be conferred on people involved in conflict resolution (all too often, national orders follow the model of Christian Orders, with their elaborate crosses, for example).

The design of the Order of Lakandula by Eric Agoncillo Ambata includes the Philippine sun (modified, of course), the Alibata script (which spells out "Lakandula") and designs that hark back to pre-Hispanic gold jewelry. Originally, a design from the Manunggul jar was included, but the National Historical Institute sensibly pointed out that some cultures might take offense at funeral adornments being included in the insignia. The color of the Order is royal blue. The Bangko Sentral's quality of manufacture is world-class.

What is the Order of Lakandula? It is one of the highest forms of recognition the Republic can bestow on a foreigner. The Quezon Service Cross, the highest civilian recognition of the Philippines, can only be conferred on Filipinos. The next highest three state orders, however, may be conferred on Filipinos or foreigners. These (listed by the date they were established) are: The Philippine Legion of Honor (for military and defense merit, and also the highest civilian recognition given by the President without requiring the concurrence of Congress), the Order of Sikatuna (for diplomatic merit), and the Order of Lakandula, for civil and political merit.

President Arroyo's EO 236, the Honors Code of the Philippines, provided for the Order of Lakandula and the criteria for its conferment. Sec. 5, II of the EO says, "The Order of Lakandula is an Order of political and civic merit awarded in memory of [Rajah] Lakandula's dedication to the responsibilities of leadership, prudence, fortitude, courage and resolve in the service of one's people. The Order of Lakandula is conferred upon a Filipino or foreign citizen: (a) who has demonstrated by his life and deeds a dedication to the welfare of society; (b) whose life is worthy of emulation by the Filipino people; (c) for deeds worthy of particular recognition, including suffering materially for the preservation and defense of the democratic way of life and of the territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines, for devoting his life to the peaceful resolution of conflict, or for demonstrating an outstanding dedication to the fostering of mutual understanding, cultural exchange, justice and dignified relations among individuals; or (d) for acts that have been traditionally recognized by the institution of presidential awards, including meritorious political and civic service."

The best way to understand the Order of Lakandula is to think of it as a confraternity of merit. Basically, an Order is a group composed of individuals recognized as meritorious by the government; the group has different ranks, based on actual achievement or their standing in government and the bureaucracy. Think of the way the Knights of Rizal or the Knights of Columbus, for example, are organized (incidentally, the Knights of Rizal are the guardians of honoring people as measured by Rizal's standards of heroism; they are recognized as such by law, and their honorees are also honorees of the state; their determinations are beyond government interference, a special privilege indeed!). The President, who has the authority and privilege, by law, to determine who gets to be a member of what, then appoints someone to be a member of an order, and confers the insignia of that order (the medal, usually), together with a diploma or certificate.

The ranks of the Order of Lakandula are (from highest to lowest): Grand Collar (Supremo)—Conferred upon an individual who has suffered materially for the preservation and defense of the democratic way of life or of the territorial integrity of the Republic of the Philippines; or upon a former or incumbent head of state and/or of government (Sen. Jose W. Diokno was the first to be posthumously awarded this); Grand Cross (Bayani)—Conferred upon an individual who has devoted his life to the peaceful resolution of conflict; upon an individual whose life is worthy of emulation by the Filipino people; or upon a Crown Prince, Vice President, Senate President, Speaker of the House, Chief Justice or the equivalent, foreign minister or other official of cabinet rank, etc. (Cardinal Sin, Salvador H. Laurel, Amb. Alfonso Yuchengco are all recipients); Grand Officer (Marangal na Pinuno), Commander (Komandante), Officer (Pinuno), and Member (Kagawad), conferred upon an individual who has demonstrated exceptional deeds of dedication to the political and civic welfare of society as a whole.

Siblings

YOUNG BLOOD

Malaya Roxanne C. Santos

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

FOR two whole years, I was the sole object of my parents' affection. From the day I was born, my mother and father carried me wherever they went, brought me to places they thought I'd enjoy and proudly introduced their darling daughter to their friends and relatives.

Then, my sister Ria was born. I was no longer the center of their attention. The new baby was the star of the show.

Feelings of insecurity turned to resentment when our neighbor teased me that my parents didn't love me anymore because they had a new baby. Though deep inside I knew this wasn't true, I was afraid the tiny creature lying inside the crib would shatter my perfect world. One time I approached Ria and when I was sure my parents were looking, I hit her head with a spoon.

Though it wasn't a strong blow, I got the attention I wanted. My parents were horrified and for the first time in my life I got a spanking from my father.

When they learned the reason for my action, they assured me that they loved me and that nothing was going to change. I had to accept the fact that I had a sister.

Little did I know that I would not only share my parents with Ria but also with another sister and two brothers. Two years after Ria was born, Rica came. After a couple of years, Red was born. A year later, mother gave birth to Reggie, our youngest. By the time I was seven, there were seven members of our family sharing a king-sized bed.

We were a lower-middle class family with seven mouths to feed. Life wasn't easy. Both our parents had to work hard to be able to provide our basic needs while spending quality time with each of their five kids. Though I had my parents' love, I no longer had their undivided attention. I had to share that along with my clothes, toys, books and just about everything else.

Though we had a frugal life, my parents saw to it that we frequently went on simple family outings like picnics at the Luneta, rides on Matorco, loafing along Roxas Boulevard and ferry rides on Manila Bay. Since we had no car, we had to take a bus or jeepney. It always took a while to get everyone inside the vehicle. Other passengers would help us older children get on since my parents had to carry my younger siblings. If there was no more space for us to sit on, mother would put two of us on her lap. Sometimes other women would offer to carry one of us. Sometimes, I felt embarrassed at having to sit on the lap of a stranger and tried to lighten my weight by half-sitting and half-standing.

Once, we took a bus rather late on our way home. My siblings fell asleep. After we got off the bus, we realized that someone was missing. My father had to run after the bus where Ria had been left behind still asleep.

Whenever we flagged down a taxicab, the driver would stare at us in astonishment and ask, "*Kayong lahat* (All of you)?" More often than not, he would refuse to take us. But there would always be someone who would himself be persuaded that we all could manage to squeeze ourselves in. My dad would sit in front and carry the two heavy boys on his lap while we three girls and our mom would take the back seat, each leaning forward or backward to find some comfortable space.

When my friends in grade school invited me to their homes, I would have a sibling in tow. When mealtime came, my friends' parents would invite us to eat with them. Though this is a cherished Filipino tradition, I was painfully aware that my friends' parents were obliged to feed not just me but my sibling.

One time during the Christmas season, my friends and I decided to go caroling in their village. We got a good amount of money and divided it equally among ourselves. Since I had my three siblings with me, we got the biggest share. We always came as a "package deal," so to speak.

At a time when my classmates did not know even how to fry an egg, I could already cook not because I had a passion for cooking but out of necessity. I was the eldest and whether I liked it or not I was responsible for my siblings. We had a schedule for doing household chores and I hated washing most. And there was always a huge pile of unwashed plates, spoons, glasses, pots and pans after every meal.

Quite often, my grandmother would come to our house to help take care of us. Whenever she cooked, she would divide the viand equally and put the portions on our plates so that there would be enough for everyone.

My parents occasionally brought home some food. Whether it was chicken, spaghetti, pastry or siopao, it was always divided equally among us. I would nibble on the measly portion I got and compare myself with my friends who didn't have as many siblings to share things with, sometimes wondering if they were luckier than me.

But the more I thought about it, the more blessed I felt for having brothers and sisters. I experienced so many things in life with my siblings that no amount of material wealth can buy. My memories of childhood are filled with laughter and the adventures we had. We climbed the *bayabas* (guava tree) in our backyard together. We played the superheroes in "Bioman" with Red as Red 1, Reggie as Green 2, Rica as Blue 3, Ria as Pink 5 and me as Yellow 4.

We were a team. Even without other children around, we were able to play group games like *patintero*, hide and seek, tug of war and many more.

Though we sometimes fought over the simplest things, we were also fiercely loyal to each other. In a neighborhood where drinking and doing drugs were part of everyday life, nobody could easily bully us, for we were there to protect each other. Ria once kicked a neighbor who had punched Red.

We took care of each other. And this was especially true when I got pregnant at the age of 18. Our whole family stood by me and shouldered the responsibilities my boyfriend ran away from.

Rica was the first of my siblings to hold my son Jaeo when he was born. Red and Reggie liked to play with my baby and carry him when he got tired. Ria would bathe Jaeo and read him bedtime stories. With their help and support, I was able to finish my studies while nursing my boy. Young as they were, they became not only my siblings but also my pillars of strength.

I can honestly say that I don't regret having so many siblings. We share each other's joy, laughter, pain, sorrow, triumphs and dreams. I wouldn't have it any other way.

Malaya Roxanne C. Santos, 25, is a freelance writer/photographer. She has published a children's book which she wrote with Jaeo.

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Who is the real culprit?

IT is about time that our lawmakers took another look at the educational system of the country. The law deregulating tuition fees is supposed to be aimed at improving the country's educational system. But this has not happened.

Instead of allowing "free-for-all" hikes in tuition, lawmakers should make stricter laws that impose higher penalties on schools that fail to provide quality education (despite increases in tuition fees).

The success of educational plans in the country is a manifestation of how much the Filipino family values education. The current brouhaha on Pacific Plans et al. raises a bigger question: Who is the real culprit in this debacle? The plan issuer that failed to fulfill its promise? The school that increased its tuition fees to unreasonably high bars? Or the government that allowed the increases? Just thinking allowed.

—ROY COLLADO,
roycollado@yahoo.com

Not a makeover of GMA's image

THIS is in reference to Gil Cabacungan Jr.'s article titled "Media moguls pitch in to help GMA repair image." (PDI, 5/17/05)

Let me make it clear to the public that the energy conservation campaign has no relation and reference whatsoever to the President's image make-over. The campaign is an initiative of the private sector, requested by Department of Trade and Industry, to increase the public's level of awareness on energy conservation. AdBoard has spearheaded the development of a tri-media campaign which will be in three phases:

1. Awareness of the problem—increasing oil prices
2. Gathering of leaders, with the initiative of Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, to sign a caveat to conserve energy in the private sector
3. Sustaining campaign on energy-saving tips

While the AdBoard developed the tri-media campaign, the media, who are likewise AdBoard members, will give space for free. I hope that this letter will clarify the issue.

—RAUL S. ALVAREZ,
chair,
Advertising Board
of the Philippines Inc. (AdBoard),
Suite 6A, Dao 1 Condominium,
189 Salcedo St.,
Legaspi Village, Makati City

A man for farmers

I AGREE with Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile: Nobody is indispensable in the government. He was referring to the resignation of PCGG (Presidential Commission on Good Government) chair Haydee Yorac.

But Sen. Nene Pimentel should be more discreet in jumping into the conclusion that Yorac was "subjected to a lot of pressure." Whether or not the resignation of the PCGG chair was due to pressure, it does not make any difference because the choice of lawyer Camilo Sabio as her replacement has been received with full support by the public, especially by coconut farmers. This has relevance to public fears about what could happen to the coconut levy in the hands of unscrupulous management.

Sabio is conversant with the plight of the farmers. He worked with them and fought for their cause during the martial law regime. A Federation of Free Farmers advocate, he manifested his strong belief that we can live in peace only when the farmers shall have been freed from social bondage. For this, he was jailed in Davao del Norte.

Besides, Sabio is very much respected in the academe. President of the Philconsa, an Ateneo de Manila law professor, a scholar during his college days, and a valedictorian from grade school to high school, Sabio has the credentials of competence.

Why Senator Pimentel appears uncomfortable with his appointment as PCGG chair defies reason. Both of them are alumni of Ateneo de Cagayan. They both graduated valedictorian in the same school. Their *paisanos* (provincemates) in Misamis Oriental are very proud of them. Let us give others a chance to shine.

—ERASTO D. SALCEDO,
retired RTC judge,
Salcedo-Arañas Law Office,
Tagum City

Undeserved credit

I REPLY to Solita Monsod's column, "Watch out for the jokes." (PDI, 4/16/05) Monsod attributes to Rep. Exequiel Javier of Antique the insertion of the alleged "poison pill" in the 1977 sin tax law (Republic Act No. 8240). By coincidence or design, the attribution was echoed in the column "Viewpoint" of Juan Mercado which appeared in the same paper two weeks later.

The attribution indeed flatters Representative Javier. He must be a very smart and powerful legislator. He must have outsmarted the bicameral conference which included Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, an eminent tax lawyer and the chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, or he must have exerted such irresistible influence that its members had no choice but to accept the alleged poison pill. How Representative Javier wished the attribution was true.

However, I smell something rotten in Monsod and Mercado's beef on cigarettes. Methinks, the lady does protest too much on cigarettes. For whom and for what?

For the record, there is no such "poison pill" in Republic Act 8240. The law contains (1) the classification of all sin products, not just cigarettes, and (2) the reservation that the classification may not be revised except by an act of Congress which Monsod condemns as the alleged poison pill.

The reservation clause was a collective decision of the bicameral conference in 1996 when Congress enacted Republic Act 8240. Hence, it was not the decision of Representative Javier. In fact, the original bill which he sponsored in the House of Representatives did not contain such reservation. The clause was only considered in the bicameral conference and for a reason. The clause was reiterated by a subsequent bicameral conference in 2004 when Congress enacted Republic Act 9334 which amended Republic Act 8240. Two bicameral conferences and two Congresses eight years apart, one in 1996 and the other in 2004, saw nothing wrong with the reservation clause.

There is an ethical reason for the reservation. The power to classify subjects of taxation is part and parcel of the power to tax, a power constitutionally vested in Congress. In the United States v. Barrias, 11 Phil. 32, the Supreme Court ruled that Congress may not abdicate its power to tax, delegate such power, and leave its exercise to the discretion of unaccountable bureaucrats.

Incidentally, both RA 8240 and RA 9339 contain a reservation clause which applies to all sin products (alcohol, beer and cigarettes). Why did Monsod and Mercado single out cigarettes? Don't they have a beef too on whisky and beer?

Thank you for giving too much credit to Representative Javier, but I think he hardly deserves it.

—EVARISTO C. TEJARES JR.,
supervising legislative staff officer 1,
Office of Congressman Exequiel Javier

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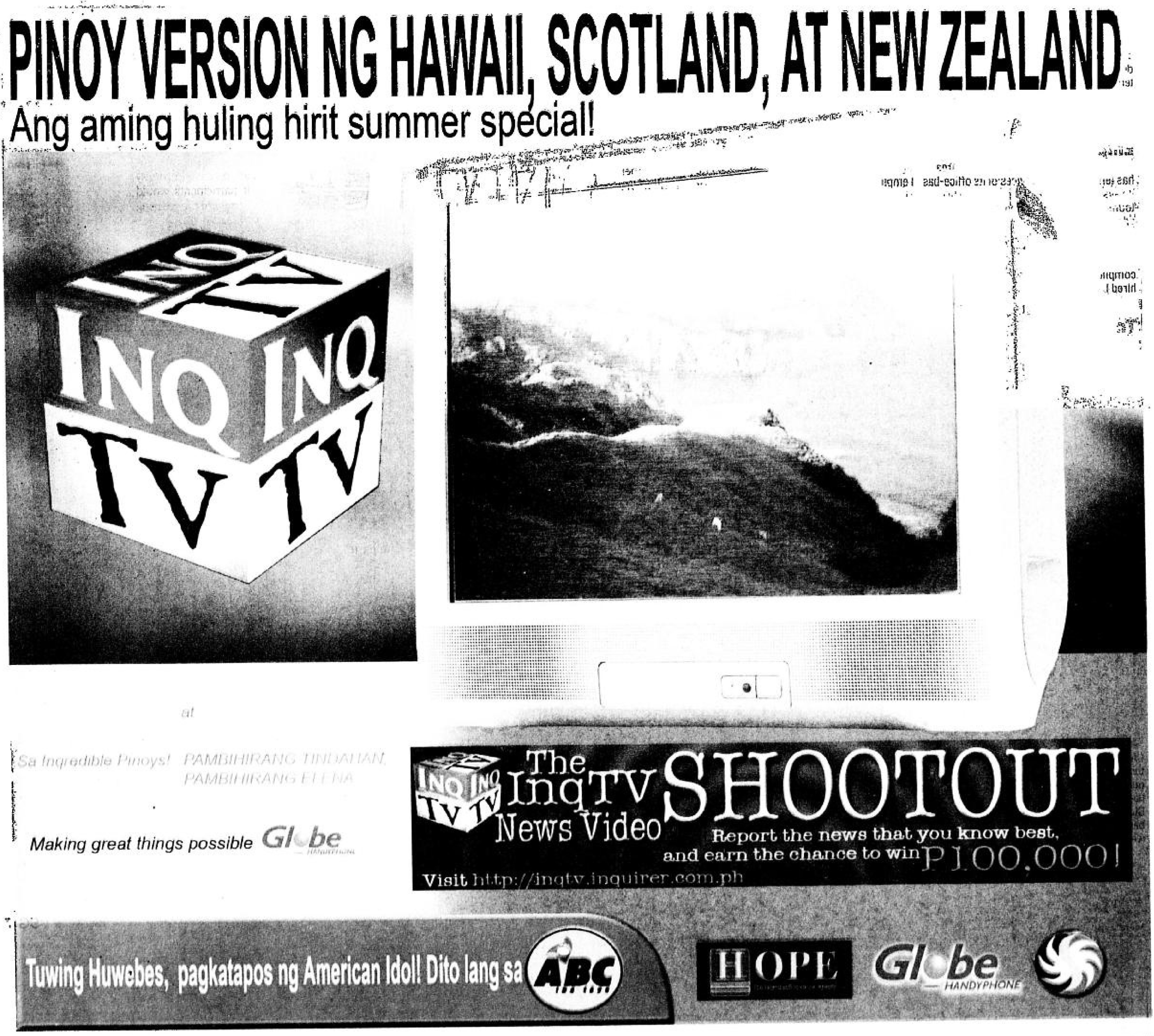
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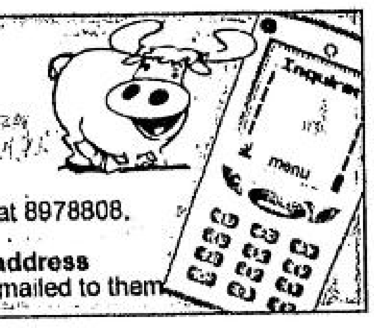

Across the NATION

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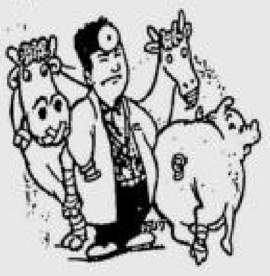
ROUNDUP

Postmaster killed in market

COTABATO CITY—An unidentified person on Monday shot and killed the postmaster of Parang, Maguindanao while the victim was in a crowded market here, police said Tuesday. Supt. Mipunod Maruhom, commander of the city police Precinct 1, said Abdul Bantilan, 50, was at the Teksing area when attacked. He died from three bullet wounds in the body. Maruhom said investigators believe that the killing was "more of a personal grudge" than "work-related."

Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Vet denies FMD in Sarangani



GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The Sarangani veterinarian's office yesterday denied reports of a foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) case in a farming village in Glan town. Joselito Cleyo, provincial veterinarian, said he ordered his men to verify the report in Barangay Kapatan and was told that it was not true. FMD is a quick-spreading viral disease affecting cattle, swine, sheep, goats, deer and other split-hoofed animals. It is characterized by blisters at the top of the affected animal's hoof and in the mouth. Cleyo said he informed the Bureau of Animal Industry in Manila about the false report as this could affect the province's livestock industry. The Department of Agriculture has declared Mindanao FMD-free.

Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Marijuana in 'lumad' area

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Some 'lumad' residents in the hinterland villages of Malungon in Sarangani have resorted to planting marijuana instead of agricultural crops, Senior Supt. Efren Valeriano, provincial police director, told reporters on Friday. Valeriano made the comment after the police found another marijuana plantation in a B'laan village on Thursday. The raiders uprooted about 600 hills of marijuana and seized 3,500 seedlings ready for planting but failed to arrest a suspect. Valeriano said the police would continue the crackdown against marijuana farmers in the town.

Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Power firm welcomes probe

BACOLOD CITY—There was nothing anomalous in the process of awarding the contract worth P3.6 billion to a Japanese firm for the building of the 40-megawatt Northern Negros Geothermal Power Plant in Bago City, said the Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) in a statement. The firm said it welcomed the inquiry sought by Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella on the bidding and awarding of the contract to Kanematsu Corp. as the process was "transparent" and in accordance with the law. Every step in the rebidding process was thoroughly evaluated and approved by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, it said. Puentevella filed a resolution directing the House committee on energy to look into allegations of irregularities, particularly in the manner in which PNOC-EDC awarded the contract to Kanematsu Corp.

Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Employees terminated

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) here has terminated the services of its office-based employees on May 2 due to delays in the release of the community's share in fees collected from tourists visiting Apo Island, from where their compensation is taken. Affected were the PAMB's eight clerks and office-based support services employees who each had a monthly pay of P3,000, said Chamberlain Babiera, protected area superintendent of the world-renowned scuba diving island. The delay had been going on for two years, despite all requirements having been complied with, he said. More than 50 other workers based on the island hired by PAMB have yet to receive their honorarium since January this year.

Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

Tour victims seek police help

BAGUIO CITY—Two residents of Cebu City have asked the police to arrest a man whom they paid at least P100,000 for a non-existent tour package in the city. Police said Dennis Elliot and Cullen Dasmariñas paid the suspect, Duane Larino, an initial P80,000 for airfare, a tour and first-class hotel accommodations in the city. Elliot and Dasmariñas said Larino accompanied them to Baguio on May 9 but contrary to their agreement, he took them to a small hotel on Session Road instead of the Camp John Hay Manor. Police said Larino again asked the victims P32,000 for their return tickets to Cebu. But the victims said they did not see Larino again after he got their money.

Ella Rhodora Layug, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Cops nab student in rob try

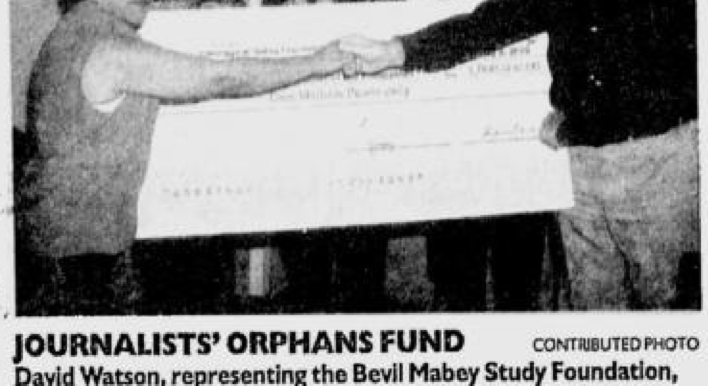
BAGUIO CITY—Police on Tuesday arrested a 20-year-old student who stabbed and wounded a taxi driver in a botched robbery in Burnham Park here. Reports said suspect Arsenio Dulnuan, a native of Ifugao, boarded the taxicab driven by Teddy Aquino, 47, at about 5 a.m. Tuesday along Lake Drive in Burnham Park. Without a word, Dulnuan opened the glove compartment of the cab and took Aquino's earnings worth P700. When Aquino protested, Dulnuan, who was armed with a knife, allegedly started punching and stabbing him. Aquino suffered cuts and stab wounds in the left arm and face.

Ella Rhodora Layug, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Guns seized from village execs

CAMP DANGWA, Benguet—Police confiscated five guns from the houses of three barangay officials in Pidigan, Abra last week. Reports here said the guns—a .38 cal. revolver, a 9 mm pistol, a .22 cal. pistol and a .22 cal. rifle—and bullets were recovered in the houses of barangay captains Benjamin Buena of Pamutic, Roberto Billedo of Alinaya and Edilberto Anin of Suyo. Members of the police's Special Task Force Abra, however, said the village officials were not in their houses when the separate searches were conducted on May 9.

PDI Northern Luzon Bureau



JOURNALISTS' ORPHANS FUND CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

David Watson, representing the Bevil Mabey Study Foundation, turns over a symbolic check for P1 million to Inday Varona-Espina, chair of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, for a scholarship program for children of slain journalists.

Quarry tax dip blamed on Lapid exemptions

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

AS GOVERNOR of Pampanga, Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid exempted mayors, barangay officials and private contractors of government projects from paying quarry taxes, his chief of staff told House investigators yesterday.

In the case of China Waters, which built a dike in Bacolor town, as much as 20,000 truckloads of sand were hauled without the provincial government getting its due share of P6 million in taxes.

The House committee on good government uncovered this during its first hearing on the alleged irregularities in the sand industry.

The committee discovered the practice as its chair, Iloilo Rep. Arthur Defensor, focused on the reason for the discrepancy of P337 million between the collection of the state-owned Natural Resources Development Corp. and the capitol from 1999 to 2001, and 2002 to 2004.

Lapid's son, Gov. Mark Lapid, referred the question to lawyer Benalfre Galang, former executive officer of the quarry task force and now the senator's chief of staff.

Galang, who spoke under oath, attributed the drop in revenues, which reached only P45.1 million in three years, to the exemptions granted by the elder Lapid, the reduction of fees for filling materials, and to corruption among personnel assigned at checkpoints.

He said corruption was committed through bribe taking and unauthorized reproduction of receipts.

Under intense grilling from Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero, Galang could not estimate the amount of revenues lost to exemptions and corruption.

Asked if Senator Lapid gave the permits out of political considerations, Galang replied no, but said, "no mayor and barangay captain was denied of the request for stocks of sand."

Defensor said gratuitous permits were effective only in the short term and for limited benefits.

"I doubt it very much whether a local government unit, like the province, can grant a gratuitous permit for a volume of 20,000 (truckloads)," Defensor said.

He said only the provincial board could give exemptions.

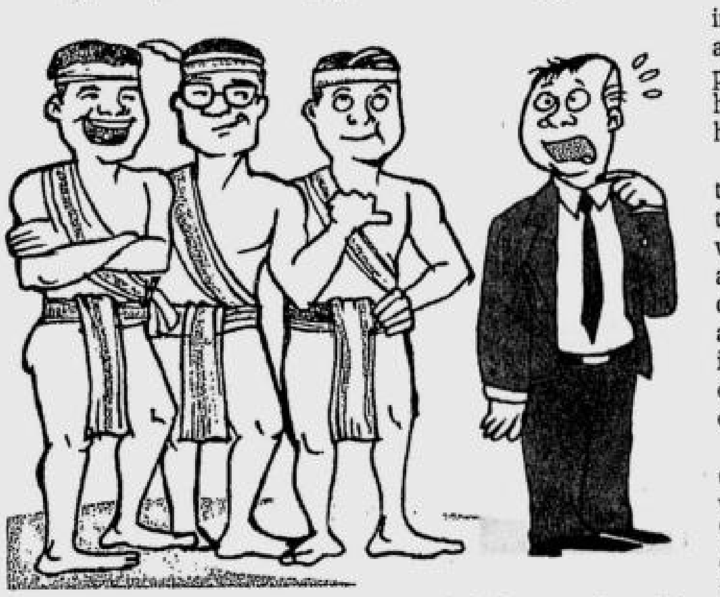
Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao said Senator Lapid did not secure any authority from the board on those matters.

Galang said all exemptions were referred to the provincial government's environment and natural resources officer, asserting that the beneficiaries were government projects.

Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan said he was worried about the scheme since this favored private contractors. Their contracts, he said, surely included the cost of materials, including sand.

Galang said it was the Department of Public Works and Highways that asked the provincial government to provide sand to China Waters.

In Vizcaya, it's g-strings or bust



BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Local officials have been required to wear their ethnic costumes, especially g-strings for men during the celebration of the province's 166th founding anniversary, which kicks off here today.

Board Member Teodorico Padilla Jr., director general of this year's Panagyaman festival, said provincial officials and mayors of the 15 towns are expected to be in their tribal costumes during the eight-day event, the highlight of which is Friday's inter-tribal festival.

This year's founding anniversary celebration, with the theme "Cultural Solidarity: A Road to Nueva Vizcaya's Excellence," will pay tribute to the province's eight tribal communities—Isinai, Gaddang, Kalanguya, Iwak, Kankanaey, Ibaloi, Bugkalot and Ifugao.

Padilla said each of the 15 towns here will represent the tribe dominant in their areas.

A traditional lower garment worn by men of these tribes is the g-string or *ba-ag*, a woven cloth wrapped around the waist and under the crotch. Tribal women, on the other hand, wear a blouse and colorful woven *tapis* (wraparound skirt).

Padilla said through time, the wearing of native costumes and the practice of traditional rituals have started to fade because of modernization.

"This is the best way by which we could feel the spirit of what we are celebrating in our province, which gives importance to indigenous peoples by preserving their cultures," said Padilla.

He said one would need to wear a g-string to appreciate the ingenuity of ancient Filipinos in designing the tribal gear that offers comfort, convenience and style.

"The g-string is the best thing to wear in the mountains when climbing steep slopes. It is also comfortable especially during the hot summer months," he said.

Although no penalties were specified for those who will not wear the traditional attire, Padilla said the celebration would be an exercise in futility if participants would disregard the wearing of costumes.

Organizers, however, did not say whether Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, who has committed to attend the festival, would also be required to wear g-strings.

One of the celebration's highlights will be the inter-tribal festival, which will feature a grand cañao feast, where five carabaos, 20 pigs and 200 chickens will be butchered.

Cultural presentations will feature native songs, dances, games and rituals of the tribes in the province, said Katalina Acpal, acting provincial tourism officer.

On Monday, Padilla and leaders of the various tribes here, clad in their native g-strings, led the weekly flag-raising ceremonies here and offered prayers for the success of the annual festival. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Town loses power for unpaid ₱17-M bill

BAUAN, Batangas—The National Power Corp. (Napocor) cut off the power supply of this town after the municipal government failed to pay its monthly bill of P17 million at 2 p.m., Tuesday.

"The Napocor demanded that Bauan pay P17 million, but Mayor Herminigildo Dolor offered only a check for P2 million," lawyer Pakito Castillo said, "And where is he now? The last we heard, he was basking under the Boracay sun while the people of Bauan were suffering from the brownout."

Castillo was mayor of Bauan until 1998, when Dolor took over and the power problems began.

According to the statement of account for Bauan that the Napocor furnished on Jan. 31, the town has unpaid electric bills totaling P279.1 million.

With an average electric bill of P11 million a month, the total bill reached about P310 million in April.

Since the brownout occurred Tuesday until yesterday, business establishments in the town had lost millions of pesos worth of services and stale food.

At the public market, candles were lighted at the meat, grocery and dried goods sections. Computer shops, film developing stores, and other electronics establishments had no choice but to close.

Bauan used to be Batangas' premier town and was on the way to cityhood in 1997.

Since Dolor became mayor, the town retrogressed from a first-class industrial town to a third-class, type B town.

The INQUIRER called Dolor's office but he was not there, according to a female employee, who denied that the mayor was in Boracay. *Mei Magsino-Lubis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

I want my son dead, says mother of rape victim

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A woman wants the death penalty for her 24-year-old son who allegedly made his 15-year-old sister a sex slave for about four months.

Mirriam (not her real name) said her daughter Kristine (not her real name) suffered so much from the harrowing experience in the hands of her older brother.

"I can't afford to kill my own son, but I want him dead for what he did," Mirriam told reporters at the police station in Polomolok, South Cotabato on Tuesday.

Her son kept on apologizing for what he did, but the mother turned a deaf ear to his plea. "Let the wheels of justice take its own course. I want justice for my daughter," she said.

Kristine said she was first raped in mid-January. Their parents and her two other brothers were out of the house then, she said.

She said she was taking a nap in the master bedroom after doing the laundry when she felt somebody on top of her and pointing a knife at her neck.

Kristine said she was surprised to see it was her brother, who was intoxicated. She said her brother threatened to kill her if she resisted.

Since then, Kristine said, her brother would abuse her almost everyday.

On May 15, Kristine said her brother again tried to rape her but failed when a brother unexpectedly came home. She said she found an opportunity to reveal what has been happening the past months.

The suspect is detained at the Polomolok police station while charges were being prepared against him.

In Kidapawan City, social workers sounded the alarm over sexual offenses committed against children following the discovery of an incestuous case involving three sisters and their father.

Zaida Jubilan-Rinsulat, social welfare officer of North Cotabato, said the case should prompt parents to be very cautious in dealing with their young children who, she stressed, were very vulnerable to abuses. *Aquiles Z. Zonio and Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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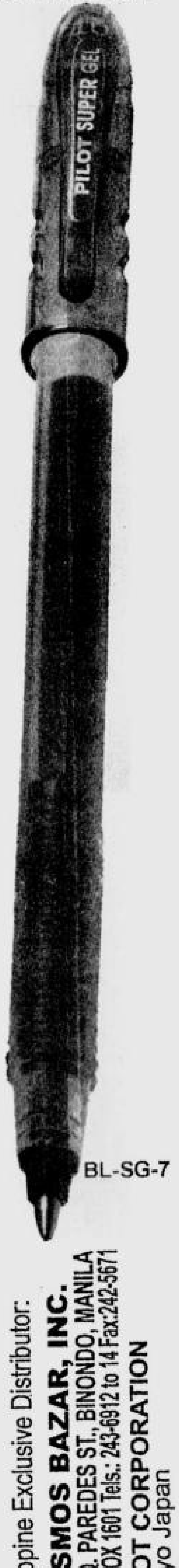

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Report warns of intrusion in toxic sites

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Two of 12 sites confirmed contaminated with toxic wastes and a suspected polluted area inside this former American air base were "irresponsibly managed" by the Clark Development Corp. (CDC), according to the People's Task Force for Bases Cleanup (PTFBC).

A PTFBC report said a Korean company grows vegetables in a greenhouse near the Mabalacat landfill (MLF) while asbestos are dumped and burned at the former ammunition dump at the Mabalacat side of the former American base.

The report also said the Civil Engineering Entomology site, near the thickly populated village of Sapang Bato in Angeles City, is poorly cordoned off.

The PTFBC reported these findings after its monitoring in Clark on May 7.

The group said the CDC, a state-owned base conversion agency, promised in 1997 to reduce if not eliminate the risks of hazardous wastes to public health.

Myrla Baldonado, PTFBC executive director, said her group would send a copy of its inspection report to the Philippine Task Force on Hazardous Waste in Former Military Installations to "bring attention to CDC's irresponsible management of the contaminated sites, management of hazardous materials and a stop to the type of land conversion that affects the quality of food."

The Philippine task force, an inter-agency body led by the Department of Foreign Affairs, said the United States government had "repeatedly stated that it has no legal obligation to restore the two bases (Clark in Pampanga and Tarlac, and Subic in Zambales and Bataan) to their original state" under the defunct 1947 Philippine-US military bases agreement.

The CDC, reached through its environmental management officer Red Fuentes, has yet to issue a statement on the PTFBC findings.

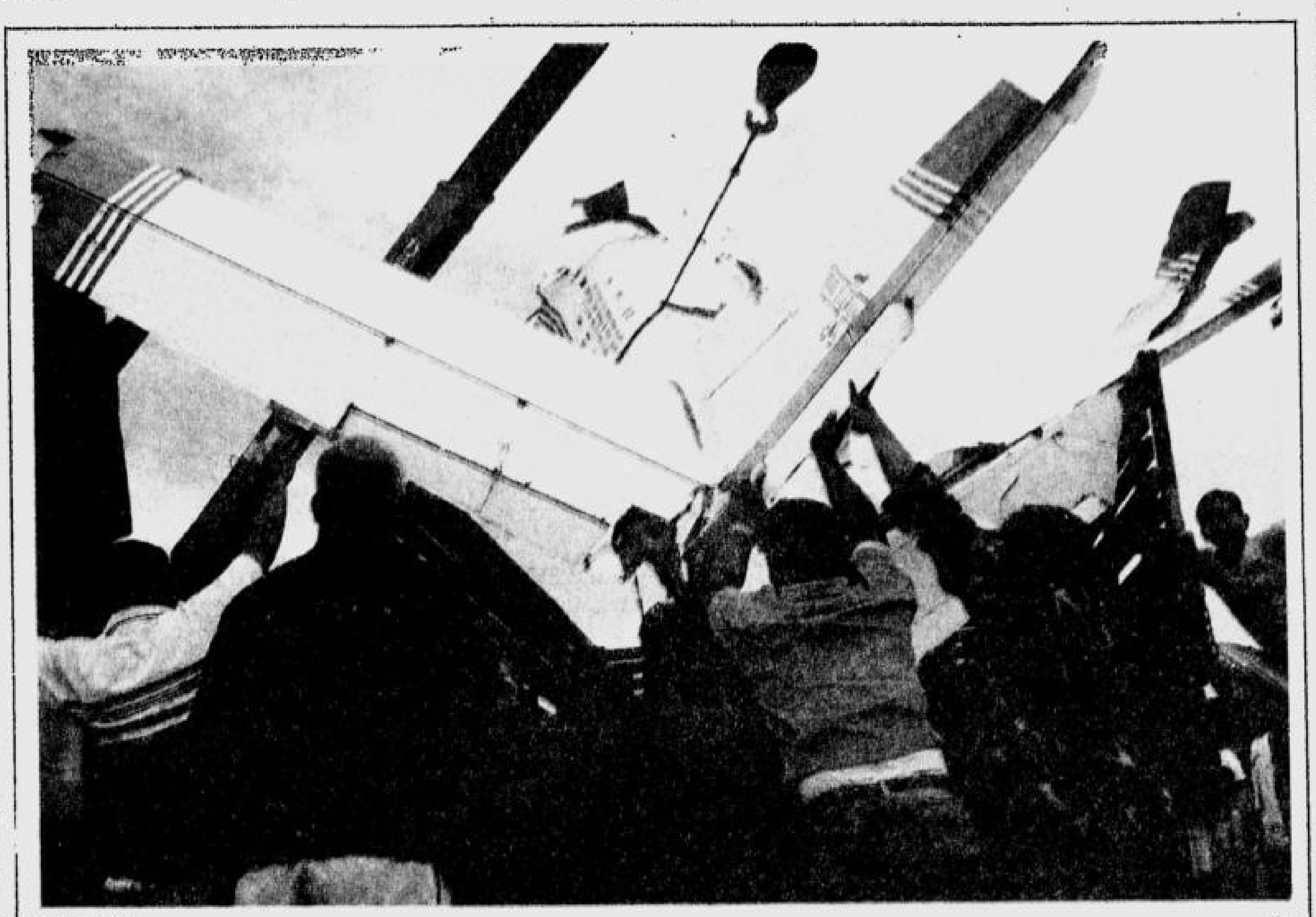
The Philippine task force said the CDC had conducted regular monitoring of water and priority sites in Clark and held radiological and hydrogeological studies on wells water and soil at the former air base.

According to the PTFBC, a Korean greenhouse sits close to the landfill and draws water from the site. It is also within the "down-gradient" or where polluted groundwater possibly exists. The company reportedly sells its produce to stores in Angeles City and Metro Manila.

The American consulting firm Weston International, which the CDC contracted to do an environmental survey of Clark, confirmed in 1997 the presence there of persistent organic pollutants like the pesticides aldrin, dieldrin and hexachlorobenzene.

"Although the soil samples from MLF were generally negative, the high levels of aldrin and dieldrin are troubling," Weston had said in its report.

"The presence of total petroleum hydrocarbons in the soil further suggests that hazardous waste was dumped at the MLF," the report said.



FALLEN

AFP

Soldiers and civilian volunteers help load into a military truck the wreck of a twin-engine Beechcraft plane that crashed in Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay on May 17. The plane's two pilots were killed in the crash.

Female pilot had premonition of her death in crash

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Flying became more than a hobby for 34-year-old Julie Ong-Lee. She dreamed of becoming a commercial pilot.

Because she wanted to get additional flying hours for her requirements, Ong-Lee went as a co-pilot in a flight of a chartered plane on Monday afternoon for Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay.

But the twin-engine six-seater plane, a Beechcraft Baron BE55, exploded in mid-air, just two miles away from the Ipil airport shortly before 2 p.m. on Monday.

The bodies of Ong-Lee, from Apas, Cebu City, and the pilot, Capt. Dioscoro Migallos Jr., 51, of Labangon, Cebu City, were found by divers in the cockpit of the plane, which sank in the waters of Ipil at around 3 p.m., according to Tirso Batucan, spokesperson of the Topflite Airways Inc. that owned the chartered plane.

Batucan said the plane was chartered to get cargo from Ipil and bring it to Cebu.

Ong-Lee was not connected with Topflite but was allowed to co-pilot the flight through Migallos' intercession. She was a flying instructor at the Flyers Philippines Inc., an aeronautical school beside the Topflite Airways in the Basak-Cagudoy portion of the Mactan Cebu International Airport.

Susan Ong-Lee, Julie's sister-in-law, said Julie apparently had some premonition about her fate because at around 11:30 a.m., before she went to the hangar of Topflite, she told her househelp Rodalyn to tell her mother that she should be cremated if she died.

She also told Rodalyn that during her funeral, they should put their messages in white balloons flying in the air and that she must be dressed with her pilot uniform.

Ong-Lee also turned over her cell phone to Rodalyn with a message that if she wouldn't be back, Rodalyn would be the new owner of her cell phone.

"That was very unusual for her to do that," Susan said.

Susan said Julie had always been so fascinated with flying that after graduating from a flying school eight years ago, she was able to convince her father to buy her a six-seater plane, which she chartered to tourists and others who wanted to lease her plane.

But since no one leased her plane on Monday, she joined the flight of Migallos so she could get additional flying hours she needed for her application in a commercial airline company next month, Susan added.

Susan said Julie was a very energetic person who, aside from flying, was also engaged in sports activities like cycling and skydiving.

Church sues woman seeking daughter's return

BAGUIO CITY—An evangelical church based in Davao City sued a 60-year-old woman here for libel after the woman denounced church officials over their alleged detention of her daughter, belated reports reaching the INQUIRER said.

Lawyer Richard Cariño, of the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) here, said Apollo Quiboloy, founder and president of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Name Above Every Other Name Inc., filed the complaint at the regional trial court in Davao City in February against Erlinda Rillon.

The complaint stemmed from Rillon's allegations before the Baguio City council that placed the church in a bad light.

FLAG had asked the Davao RTC to dismiss the libel suit, Rillon said.

Rillon sought a council investigation of the church's headquarters in Davao City where her 19-year-old daughter, Arlene, has been staying for more than a year now.

In a series of letters to the council's committee on human rights in January, Rillon said Arlene was persuaded to serve the church after she allowed her daughter to join a youth camp in 2004. Arlene was a minor at that time, Rillon said.

Arlene's parents used to be members of Quiboloy's church, but they left it over their legal battle to recover the girl.

However, the Baguio council's committee on human rights has relented to the church's assertion that it may not allow itself to be investigated by the council because of the constitutional provision on the separation of church and state.

In a report last week, the committee indicated it could not defy the constitutional protection of religious organizations, said Councilor Jose Molintas, committee chair.

Rillon said she also received bad news from the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

A DSWD official has advised the DSWD Cordillera office to treat Rillon to government counseling, in order to enable her to accept Arlene's decision.

Dulfie Tobias-Shalim, DSWD Cordillera director, had appealed to Quiboloy's "value of family unity" in an Oct. 27, 2004 letter to convince him to return Arlene to her parents here.

Social workers from Davao had also asked their Cordillera counterparts to intercede in the transfer of Arlene's school records so she can pursue her studies there, Rillon said.

Arlene dropped out of her undergraduate course in psychology at a Catholic Church-run university here.

Lawyer Charlemagne Aldevera, Quiboloy's counsel, pointed out in a February letter to Molintas that Arlene had testified against her own parents when they tried in August to obtain a writ of habeas corpus from the RTC here.

Judge Clarence Villanueva dismissed Rillon's habeas corpus petition when local prosecutors advised him that Arlene had turned 19 years old during the suit. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Escaped inmate killed; 2 others recaptured

OZAMIZ CITY—An escaped inmate was killed while two others gave up as authorities tried to recapture them early Wednesday in a hinterland village here.

Joseph Anore was killed as he allegedly resisted arrest by engaging in a gunfight several armed village watchmen of Barangay Capucao P led by village chief Adamson Arobo.

Arobo and his men were tipped off that three of the 11 escapees in a May 8 jailbreak here were hiding in their barangay and timed the raid at around 5 a.m.

But they were met by Anore's gunshots, prompting them to fire back.

Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog Sr. told reporters the gunfight was "only brief" and was followed by a standoff during which Anore's two companions sent surrender feelers.

The other escapees were identified as Melchor Biliran alias Buging and a certain Warwar Manzan. Biliran is said to have led the jailbreak.

With the recapture of Biliran and Manzan, only four escapees remained at large. The other four earlier gave up to authorities.

Past midnight of May 8, 11 inmates, a number of whom charged with heinous crimes, fled from detention by destroying the iron grills of their cell, then jumping out of a dilapidated concrete fence. *Ryan D. Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Davao councilor demands cut in city's water rates

DAVAO CITY—A city councilor here has asked for a rollback of water rates instead of a 60-percent increase sought by the Davao City Water District (DCWD).

In a privilege speech during the city council's regular session Wednesday, Councilor Danilo Dayanghirang said DCWD should rollback water rates because figures would show that it has been earning so much to cover its operations and expansion projects.

"I appeal to the DCWD to be realistic and live up to their vision, mission and corporate philosophy," Dayanghirang said.

The DCWD's vision is to be the best and most efficient water utility in Asia, provide quality water at reasonable cost and ensure continued water supply. Its mission is to supply potable and affordable water 24 hours a day, deliver reliable service and be active on environmental concerns. Its corporate philosophy is service with dignity and honor.

But Dayanghirang said these vision, mission and philosophy are just in writing and imaginary.

He said DCWD has operated profitably, having posted a record high net income of P148 million in 2003, P144 million in 2002, P99 million in 2001 and P75 million in 2000. *Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Army exec vows to get Ka Roger next time

LUCENA CITY—Short of directly admitting that government soldiers bungled their latest try to capture the elusive communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, an official in the military's Southern Luzon Command vowed to get him the next time.

"Since he is wanted by the law, all government forces will be always after him. Time will surely come that he will also fall just like the rest of other rebel leaders," Maj. Jose Broso, Solcom spokesperson, said.

Last week, government soldiers penetrated a New People's Army camp in Sitio Munting Dumagmang, Barangay Dumagmang, Labo, Camarines Norte near Barangay Mapulot, Tagkawayan, Quezon.

But despite the massive deployment of forces backed up by helicopters, Rosal and his men still managed to escape unharmed and slip through the tight military cordon.

According to Broso, in a hurried bid to escape the assault of the military, Rosal left his laptop computers, several mobile phone units and personal belongings.

Roster

Broso claimed that the seized laptop contained the roster of NPA rebels, from regular guerrillas to prospective recruits.

"Since we now have their identities, the best option left for those included in the roster is to surrender and abandon the futile armed struggle," he said.

He declined to divulge the areas of operation of those rebels that are included in the file.

He also declined to elaborate the other pieces of information that are stored in the laptop computer.

Broso admitted that there was no reported NPA rebel captured during the operation.

He was also not able to confirm whether there were rebel casualties during the attack.

Guesswork

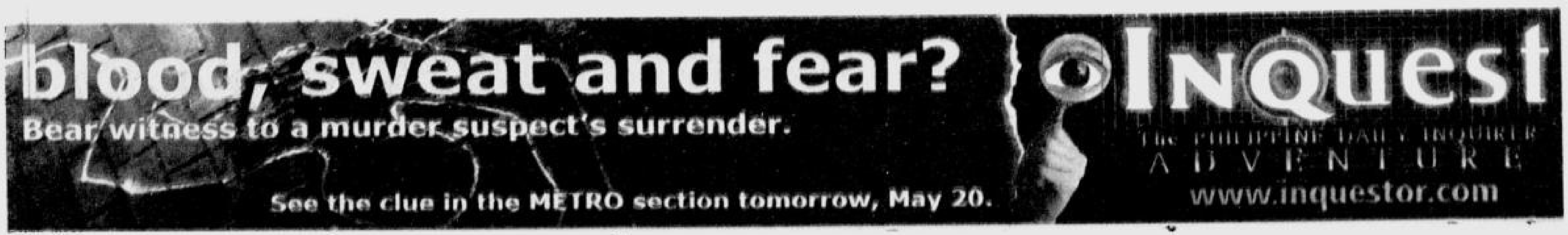
"There were no reported NPA casualties but we believe that the dead bodies were probably carried by their comrades in order to avoid demoralization from among their ranks," he said.

In the last contact with Rosal, he clarified that five among his staff members, who were initially reported as unaccounted for, were now united with his group.

But he admitted that he really lost his laptop computer and several of his cell phone units during the attack.

The assault on NPA camps came amid the increasing frequency of attacks on members and leaders of Leftist organizations, among them the party-list group Bayan Muna.

In a report, Bayan Muna said as a result of the counter-insurgency campaign, 31 civilians had been killed, 19 of whom were members of Leftist organizations. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*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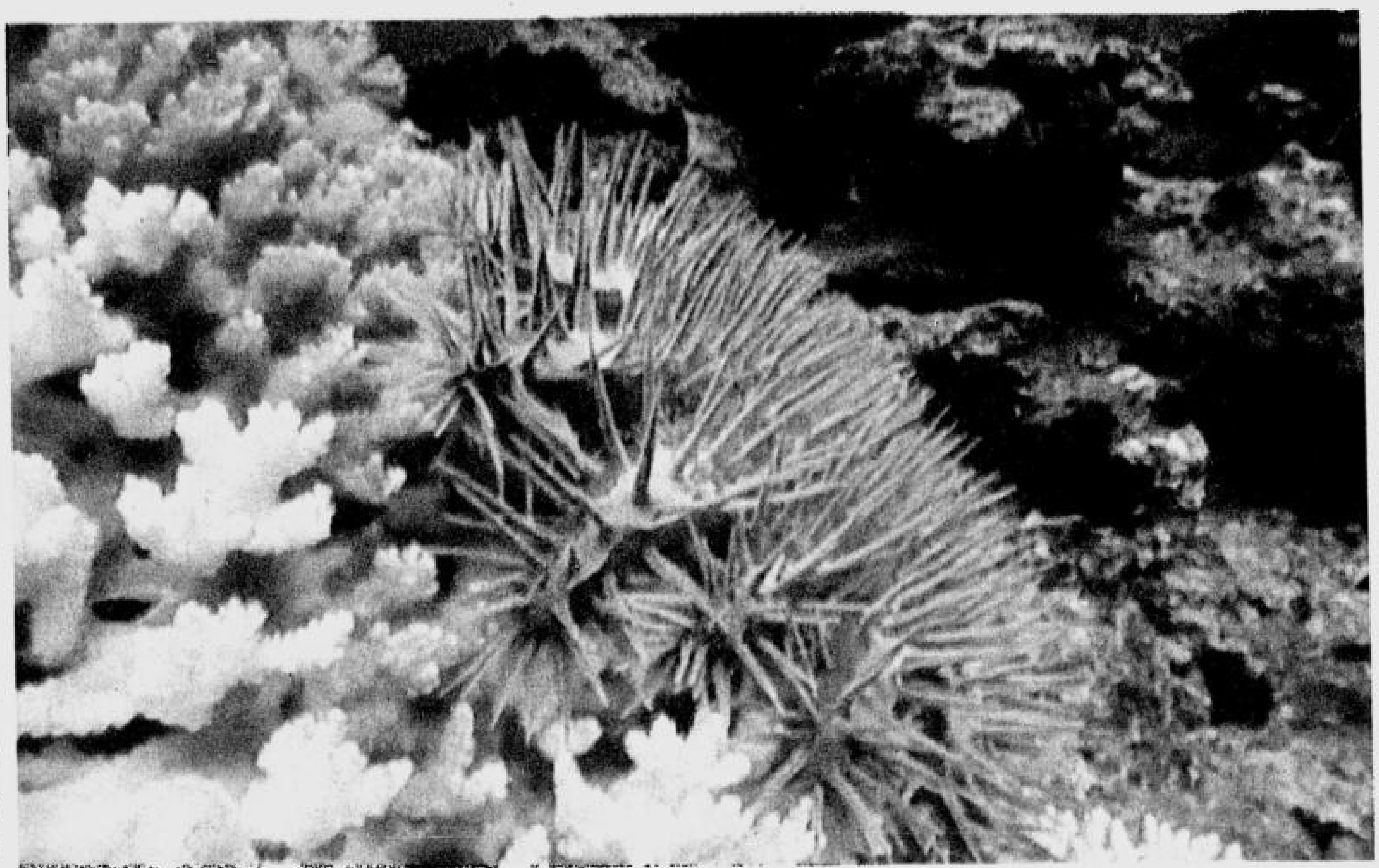
INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Floreño G. Solmirano**

Albay reefs now divers' nightmare

By Gil Francis Arevalo
Legazpi City



CROWN-OF-THORNS starfish gobble up a coral formation in the Pasig Reef off Albay's coastline.

DUMBAR MORALES/CONTRIBUTOR

ALBAY'S underwater marvel is now a divers' nightmare, with about 90 percent of marine reefs in at least 19 coastal areas in the province damaged or considerably destroyed, according to a group of scuba divers.

Jory Los Baños, executive director of the Bicol Scuba Divers Foundation Inc. (BSDFI), has blamed the tragedy on widespread dynamite, cyanide and other harmful methods of fishing during the past decade.

Crown-of-thorns (*Acanthaster plancii*), a starfish known for its voracious appetite for live hard-corals, continue to ravage coral formations, he said.

The foundation, which has 50 diver-members, said *"taksay"* (trawl) and *"palakaya"* fishermen, who use fine nets, had also been responsible for the deterioration of the areas.

The situation has prompted officials of Legazpi City, the Navy's South Luzon Command and the BSDFI to embark on a project to save the marine reefs ecosystems.

On Sunday, rehabilitation work started in eight marine reefs along the Albay Gulf that needed immediate action. These are the Dakulang Masulog, Sadit na Masulog, Pasig, Paulohan, Itum na Buya, Pulang Buya, Garcia and Polliqui.

Los Baños said the reefs used to have abundant sea bottom-lying and copious big fish.

"We found that a number of unique corals are in great danger because of the grave effects of both blast and cyanide fishing," he said. The species included the big pink corals that can be found only in the Pasig Reef.

Rehabilitation of the corals normally takes 30 to 60 years, Los Baños said.

Watch list

Members of the three groups involved in the program installed more than 20 artificial fish shelters for small fish and about 300 kilos of solid concrete reefs in the eight troubled spots.

Other areas in the watch list of environmental concerns in Albay are the islands of Cagraray, Rapu-Rapu and San Miguel and the towns of Sto. Domingo, Manito, and Pioduran. These are considered top ecotourism destinations in Bicol, whose wildlife sanctuaries attract many foreign tourists.

People living in the areas depend mainly on fishing for their livelihood, some of them have resorted to cyanide or dynamite fishing. According to the BSDFI, three to five blasts occurred every hour in these areas.

In Rapu-Rapu, some residents observed that every day seemed to be like New Year's Eve in their place because of the explosions.

"The incidence of Rapu-Rapu blast fishing is double… than those in other areas in Albay. So based on our monitoring, though fish is still abundant in this area, damage to the reefs is beyond what one can imagine," Los Baños said.

Conservation

If the situation persists, he said the fish sanctuaries and corals would be gone in five years.

Like San Miguel, Rapu-Rapu has been chosen a priority area for marine conservation priority by Philreefs, a consortium of conservationist organizations working for the protection, rehabilitation and management of coral reefs.

The selection is an offshoot of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for the Philippines after the formulation of the Philippine Strategy for Biological Diversity Conservation or PSB-DC.

Rapu-Rapu is included in the conservation priority areas for reef fish, whale sharks, elasmobranches and turtles.

San Miguel has a marine fishery reserve, a 2.25-sq.km marine protected area in Lagonoy Gulf off Tabaco City. In 2002, it was awarded the second best-managed reefs in the country.

Strict monitoring

Aside from the constant monitoring of illegal fishing activities and underwater inspection, the reefs need more artificial fish shelters and concrete reefs, plus coral transplants, Los Baños said.

Coral transplanting will take place later, he said. The modern technique involves attaching a part of a mother coral to a special base (artificial reef) with a special glue.

"What we're doing is not to wait for 30 to 60 long years before corals emerge. If that happens, Albay will lost all its reefs," the BSDFI official said. "With the coral transplant, it (outgrowth) would only take at least three to five years."

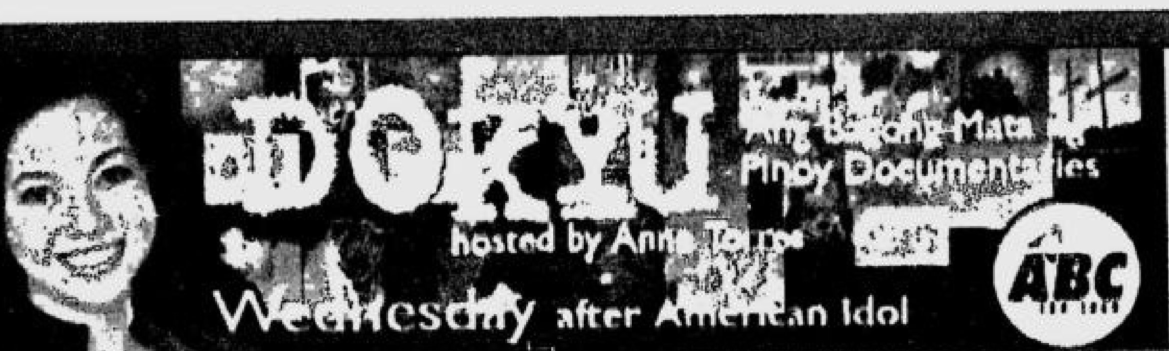
"Right now, the coordination with Philippine Navy and the BSDFI is very, very significant, with the overwhelming support of some nongovernment organizations and environmentalists," said Legazpi Councilor Rodjie Abril, chair of the city council's committee on environment. "We really need to implement strict monitoring in these areas."

"We have already started the all-out rehabilitation program, so expect that through one of its components, strict monitoring, not only the illegal fishermen will be caught or punished accordingly but also those in position of authority who are directly and indirectly involved in illegal fishing," Los Baños said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Thursday, May 19, 2005



DOKYU
Ang Bagong Mata ng Pinoy Documentaries
hosted by Anne Torres
Wednesday after American Idol
ABC

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4.25 PM)	Yu-Gi-Oh! (5:10 PM)	Naruto (5.35 PM)	Vidjoking	Qpids	TV Patrol World		Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Hiram	Memories Of Bali	Stained Glass	Maalaala Mo Kaya			Insider
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	EZ Shop	PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	American Idol		Inq TV	
GMA 7	Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Now and Forever	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knockout	Sorcerer Orphen	Sweet Eighteen	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Dama	Encantadia (8.45 PM)	All About Eve (9.15 PM)		Magpakailanman			Saksi
RPN 9		Metro TV Shopping	Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob		NBA On RPN					Band Of Brothers		Newswatch Now	Video Hit Parade	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Home Shopping Network		Japan 9-Ball Women's Finals			TM Regional		IBC News Tonite		
JackTV	Just For Laughs	Just For Laughs	Ride With Funk Master Flex	Jack In The Box				Cinematch	Family Guy	Mad TV		Reno 911	Crank Yankers	South Park	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Hip-Hop Nation	Ride With Funk Master Flex	WWE Velocity	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Yakkity Yak	Chalkzone	Rocket Power	Hey Arnold!	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Presents		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Significant Others	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Good Morning Miami	Commited	American Dreams		Queer Eye For The Straight Girl		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
Cinema One		Got 2 Believe		Yes Darling, Walang Matigas Na Pulis				Amasona				Engkanto				Di Na Natuto Sorry Na Pwede Ba?			
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Batman Beyond	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	America's Next Top Model			The Bachelorette		News Central	Oprah		Yes Dear
AXN		Fear Factor (Season V)		CSI NY (Season I)		Gensomaden Saiyuki	Gensomaden Saiyuki	Pensacola (Season III)		Alias (Season II)		30 Seconds To Fame	Mondo Magic	Lost		The Contender		David Blaine Frozen In Time	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		American Idol	Growing Up Gotti	Buffy The Vampire Slayer		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol	Growing Up Gotti	The Simple Life	Arrested Development	The Apprentice		Friends	American Idol
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	CNN Business Traveller	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Frontlines Of Construction		Explorations Powered By Duracell		Evolution		Egypt Detectives	Africa From The Ground Up	Wow		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Frontlines Of Construction		Explorations Powered By Duracell	
Solar Sports						Kotv Magazine	ATP World Team C'ship '05		GWS Ep.19-2005				Sports Desk	NBA Playoffs Conf. Sfinals Game5					Destination Finals
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Tyler's Ultimate	E! News Weekend		Good Finds	Life & Style		Area		Road & Track	Back To Basics
HBO	Path To War (2:20 PM)					The Remains Of The Day					Striking Distance (7:20 PM)			Once Upon A Time In Mexico			A Walk To Remember		
Star Movies				Monster's Ball				The Metro Chase (5:50 PM)			Romy & Michele's Hi-School Reunion			The Country Bears			Laws Of Attraction		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Ed, Edd N Eddy	Mucha Lucha!	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Gundam Wing	Shaman King	Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Dexter's Laboratory	Time Squad	Thundercats	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Gundam Seed
ESPN		2005 WPBA Carolina Classic		Goals!	LPGA Golf Chick-Fil-A Charity C'ship by N. Lopez				Singapore Cup '05 Sydney vs. Jordan				2004 Women's Trick Shot Magic CT USA		Sportscenter Asia	2005 WPBA Great Lakes Classic Michigan,USA		Goals!	Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	Buzz Lightyear Of Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax	Anna's Dream (2.45 PM)			Singles (4.15 PM)			The Haunting of Seacliff Inn			Who's Your Daddy?				Scenes Of The Crime			The Ring		Hustle (11.25 PM)
Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Strong Medicine		HCA The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	Bewitched	Hustle		Strong Medicine		Incident In A Small Town			Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		
Discovery Channel		Hour Asia		Hour China		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Extreme Machines		Superstructures		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Power Zone	
Sports Plus	Eds Byron Nelson C'ship Day3						The Search TV	Raceworld		World's Greatest Auto Shows		World Poker Tour ep.6 Connecticut				Nascar Chevy American Rev. 400			

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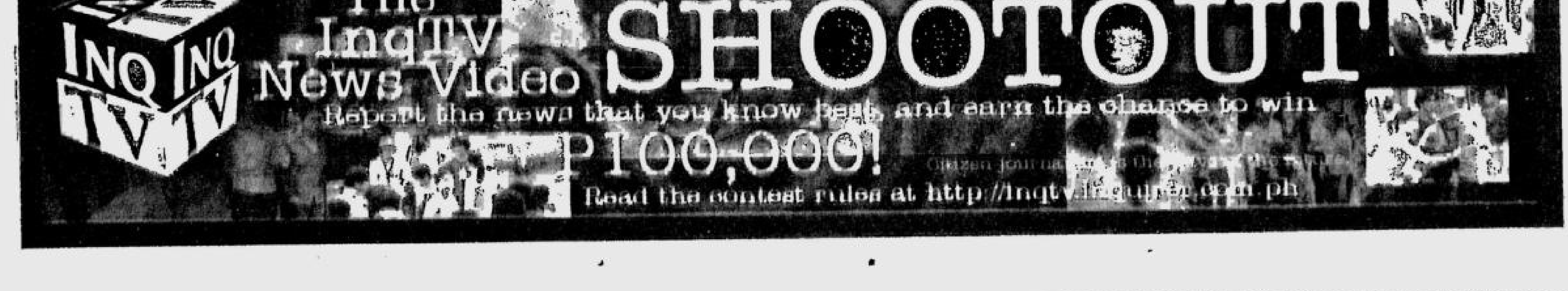

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'Brains' in P130-M kidnapping nabbed

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE ALLEGED mastermind behind the abduction of a 19-year-old veterinary medicine student four years ago was arrested by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation early this week in Binondo, Manila.

The suspect was identified as Willie Lopez, 38, of Binondo, and a cousin of victim Niño Lorenzo Tobiano.

Lopez, who claimed that he was a businessman, disappeared after he was charged with the Aug. 2, 2002, kidnapping of Tobiano who was abducted in front of the Araneta University dormitory in Malabon.

Tobiano was enrolled in a veterinary medicine course at the school.

NBI Criminal Investigation Division (CID) chief Ferdinand Lavin said Lopez conspired with former Navotas policeman Rodolfo Magleo, Roger Magleo, brothers Antonio and Bryan Ajoc, Alex Go and Abu Hakin in kidnapping Tobiano.

They reportedly kept Tobiano inside a septic tank in their Bulacan safehouse as they told his family to pay $1 million and P80 million, Lavin said.

Lavin said the family agreed to pay P4 million but the kidnapper rejected the offer.

"Lopez, as the victim's cousin, knew that the family was capable of paying the huge ransom," NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said.

On the eighth day, the kidnappers cemented the opening of the septic tank after learning that the police were closing in on them.

Out of the septic tank

However, Lavin said, Tobiano managed to dig his way out of the septic tank before the cement could harden. He then sought police assistance.

Rodolfo Magleo and the Ajoc brothers were arrested shortly afterwards. They testified and implicated the other members of the group, including Lopez who reportedly acted as a negotiator.

Malabon City Regional Trial Court Judge Emmanuel Laurea sentenced to death Rodolfo and the Ajoc brothers in July 2004 for the kidnapping.

The three were also ordered to pay Tobiano P50,000 in moral damages.

The other suspects, Roger Magleo, Hakin, and Go remain at large.

But Lopez denied the accusations, shaking his head and smirking at reporters when asked about his alleged involvement in the case.

"The student has left for abroad because he was apparently severely traumatized by the incident," Wycoco said.

Passport project in Munti

By Fran Katigbak

RESIDENTS of Muntinlupa City and surrounding areas may not need to go to Manila to get a passport.

On Saturday, a mobile passport processing center will be set up at City Hall's People's Center from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The project, organized by the local government in cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs, will offer services like passport application and renewal, which will cost P750.

7-day processing period

Applicants can claim their passports after seven days, or on May 28, also at the City Hall.

"Unlike before, processing took longer because of double-checking and security concerns," said Tez Valencia of the city's Public Information Office.

Requirements for passport application are an authenticated birth certificate, two passport-size photos, two valid IDs, and the old passport for those who will apply for renewal.

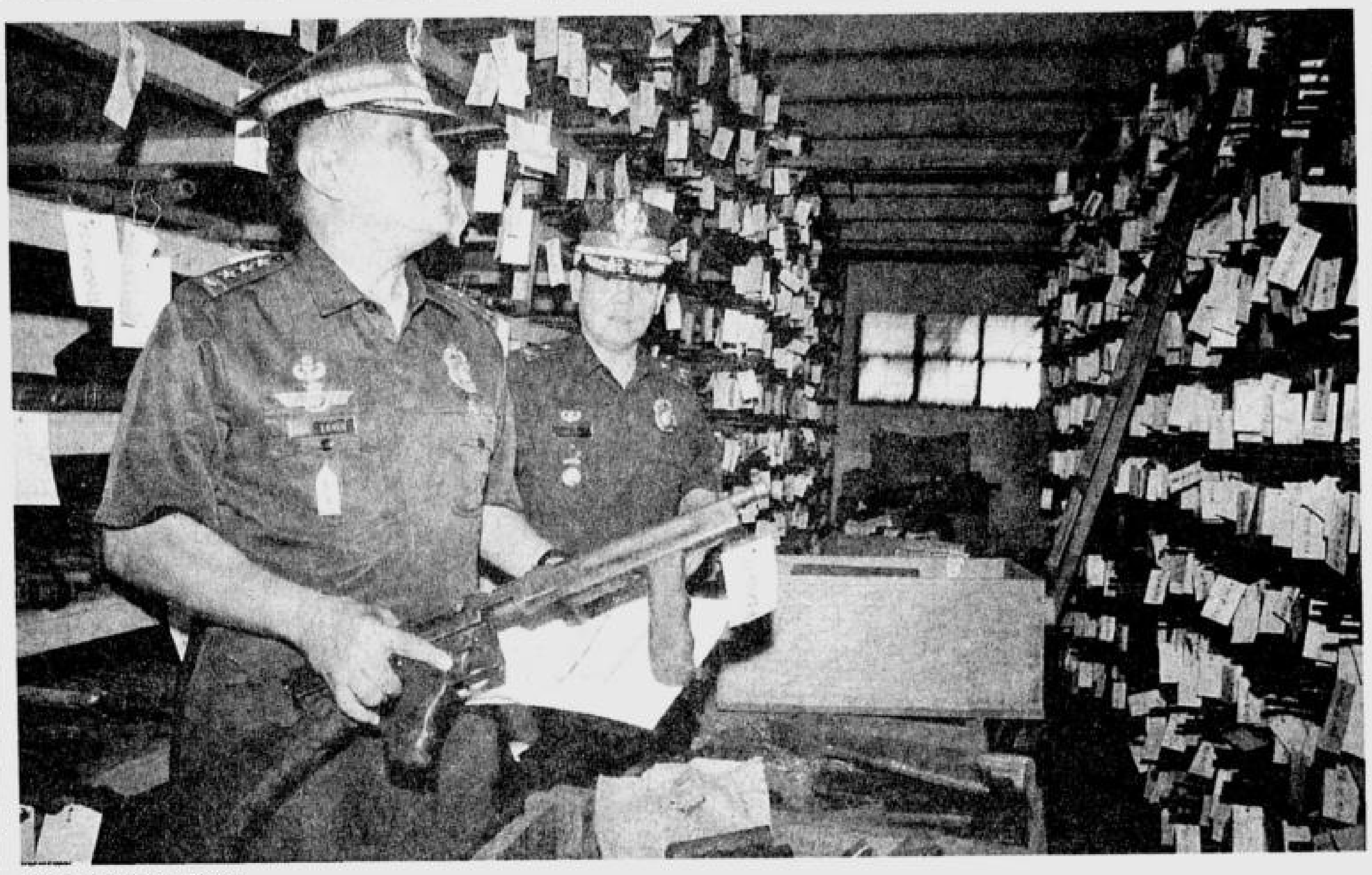
Python finds new home in QC

FROM Forbes Park to Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife.

The 14-foot python caught by Forbes Park's security personnel inside a school Saturday has a new–though definitely less posh–residence. The snake was turned over by Forbes barangay leaders to the rescue center of the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife in Quezon City Tuesday night.

Wildlife chief Theresa Mundita Lim said the python would stay in a small cage until the bureau has decided what to do with it. The python had already thrown up the dog it swallowed whole at Forbes Park, she said.The reticulated python, which can grow up to 23 feet, is the only type of python found in local wildlife.

Blanche S. Rivera and Miko Morelos



LOOSE FIREARMS
Police Deputy Director General Ricardo de Leon and Gen. Arturo Cacdac, director of the Firearms and Explosives Unit inspect 149,501 loose firearms at Camp Crame, after President Macapagal-Arroyo's order to track down loose firearms.
PDI PHOTO / VAL HANDUMON

Ramos sis will honor DOJ summons-DFA

By Nikko Dizon

A FOREIGN Affairs official yesterday said Leticia Ramos, youngest sister of slain diplomat Alicia Ramos, asked him for help in finding a lawyer to assist her when she faces state prosecutors today at the Department of Justice (DOJ).

"She will honor the subpoena that's why she's already looking for a lawyer," said DFA Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin.

Being an officer of the DFA, Ramos understands the importance of a subpoena, he added.

Ebdalin described Leticia's visit and request as personal, since he was a good friend of Alicia who had been his colleague for over three decades.

Ebdalin said the DFA would not be involved in the preliminary investigation.

"The subpoena was addressed to an individual and not the DFA. Leticia being a DFA officer, is only incidental in the investigation," he said.

An agent of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) went to Ramos' office yesterday morning to serve her the second DOJ subpoena. It was received by the head of the DFA security.

Ramos had been on leave from work since the brutal killing of Alicia last April 24 in their Makati City home. A first subpoena served last week was reportedly ignored by Ramos.

The subpoena ordered Ramos to appear before state prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco at the DOJ building at 10:30 a.m. to testify in the ongoing preliminary investigation into the brutal killing of her sister.

Alicia, a top diplomat who served various assignments in her 30-year career at the DFA, was strangled to death allegedly by the robbers that broke into their house. Leticia was hogtied but managed to escape and seek help. The investigation took a bizarre twist when the alleged mastermind claimed that it was the eldest Ramos sister, Ester Bailey, who ordered the suspects to scare Alicia and Leticia supposedly because of money matters.

But Ester's personal doctor said she was not capable of giving such orders because she had been ill for sometime and was in fact under treatment at a hospital.

Cops puzzled at Mandaluyong City Hall robberies

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE SERIES of burglaries at the Mandaluyong City Hall compound is starting to worry employees and puzzle the police.

This week, three robberies were reported, two of which happened at the Commission on Elections (Comelec) office.

After losing computer parts and four digital cameras to burglars, the local Comelec decided to suspend the new round of voters' registration until next week.

The registration should have started on Monday but the burglaries left the office with no equipment.

"The burglar dismantled our computers, got the hard disks and other parts," elections officer Ma. Anne Lacuesta said.

The burglar apparently got inside by destroying the locks of the office, which was a few meters from city police headquarters.

Inside, the burglar dragged an electric fan to cool himself as he dismantled the computers .

The burglar put the computer parts in two boxes which he left near the post office. He apparently planned to go back for it as he carried off a computer monitor, PO1 Nerito Lobrido said.

But the burglar failed to go back for the loot. Police recovered the two boxes of computer parts. The computer monitor was also later found in a garbage cart.

The robber managed to carry off a digital camera, which had just been delivered to the office on Friday, Lacuesta said.

The stolen digital camera had just been delivered because the office lost three digital cameras and several computer parts in a robbery just last Thursday.

In the earlier burglary, the office also lost hard drives and other computer parts, a printer and three digital cameras.

Lacuesta said the burglars probably worked at or were familiar with the City Hall layout.

Weeks ago, a burglar also broke into the health office and took off with computer parts.

Resort owner killed

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE DOOR was open so househelper Editha Pendre went inside to bring her employer's dinner Tuesday night. She was shocked to see her boss, businessman Melencio Caina, 50, hogtied.

Two men with knives and a 9-mm handgun grabbed and hogtied the helper before dragging her to the toilet.

Minutes later, two gunshots rang inside the house at the Wells Resort compound in Baras, Rizal.

After the two men fled, Pendre stepped out of the toilet and saw Caina lying bloodied on the floor.

The businessman had been stabbed at least 15 times and was shot in the forehead, said Rizal police director Senior Supt. Leocadio Santiago.

A few meters from the house, security guard Nolito Nazilla, 23, was also dead from a gunshot wound in the head.

Initial investigation pointed to a robbery since drawers inside the house in Barangay San Jose had been forcibly opened.

Failed extortion eyed

But Santiago said they were also looking at a possible extortion attempt by New People's Army rebels.

He said Caina, who was also in the real estate business, apparently knew his killers.

Nazilla, who was posted at the gate of the family owned resort, appeared to have let the two men in at about 6 p.m.

Caina also seemed to have let the men into the house because of the lack of signs of forcible entry.

Police said they were looking into reports that the suspects tried to extort revolutionary taxes from the victim before killing him.

As they fled, the killers shot Nazilla, Santiago said.

The killers then hopped onto a red motorcycle and fled towards Morong.

Apart from 9 mm bullet shells and a knife, police also recovered a backpack inside the house.

The bag, which is believed to belong to the assailants, contained a black bull cap, a pair of red shorts, two white shirts, a black jacket, a black shirt and 9 mm bullets.

A lesson in good manners

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

VIVA Hot Babe Ana Leah Javier said she was offered P1 million by persons identified with Zambales Rep. Antonio Diaz in exchange for withdrawing her sexual harassment case against the lawmaker.

The complaint is pending before the House of Representatives ethics committee.

If I were Javier, I would accept the offer. Anyway, Diaz has suffered enough humiliation because of the bad publicity as a result of Javier's complaint.

This will teach Diaz and other lawmakers a lesson in good manners in dealing with women.

Even women supposedly of ill repute deserve respect.

I am not saying Javier is a woman of ill repute.

I'm saying that the congressman should have treated her as a gentleman treats a lady.

Diaz perhaps believed his power and influence made him impervious to complaints from people who are not as influential as he.

The papers were full of reports many years ago that this guy spent millions of pesos in government money gobbling sushi and sashimi in a classy Japanese restaurant over a three-month period!

I wonder why voters in Zambales elected him again after they learned about his voracious appetite.

Baka pareho lang siya sa mga bumoto sa kanya.

In that case, Diaz and his constituency deserve each other.

* * *

The proposal to make prominent civilians police deputies might breeze through the National Police Commission (Napolcom), the police regulatory and policy-making body.

Napolcom Commissioner Miguel Coronel, a retired police director (equivalent to the military's two-star general), said he would recommend its approval to his fellow commissioners in the collegial body.

The Napolcom board of commissioners is headed by Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes as chair.

Coronel, who was a member of a PNP think tank when he was in the service, said that when he was the provincial commander in Negros Occidental, he inducted combat shooting enthusiasts as deputy members of the police force.

"Members of the PPSA (Philippine Practical Shooting Association), Bacolod chapter, never abused their power as deputy policemen," he said

The Bacolod shooters were a disciplined bunch, Coronel said.

There was not a single complaint against them during the time they were deputy policemen.

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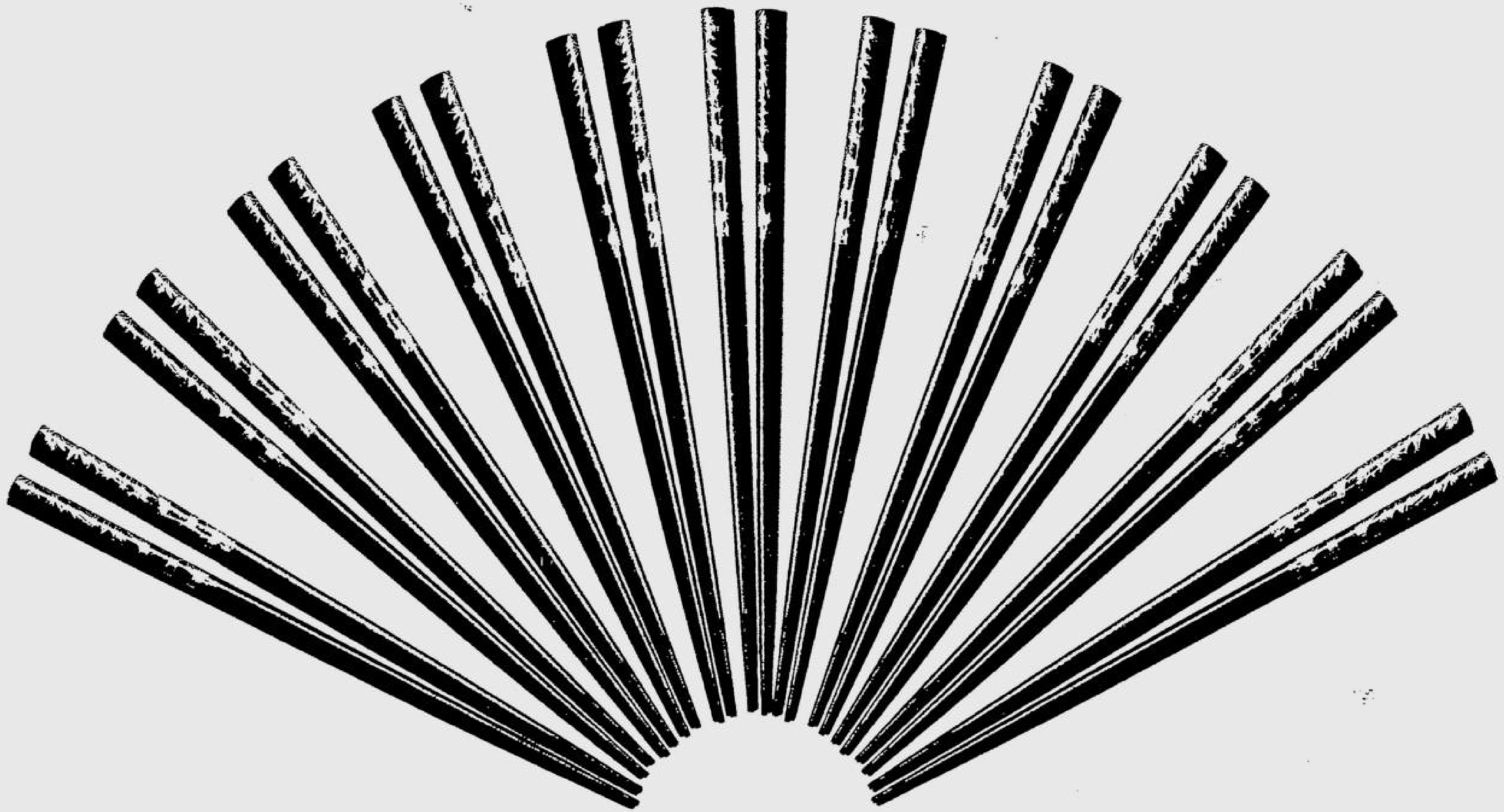

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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

SPORTS TV

GOLF: LPGA Chick-Fil-A; 4:30 p.m.; ESPN - See if Annika Sorenstam rules another tournament

BASKETBALL: NBA Playoffs - Mavs vs Suns; 9 a.m., Game 5; Solar Sports - The series moves back to the dessert in Phoenix

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Compiled by L. Manguiat

RP Open blasts off at Malarayat

By Musong R. Castillo

LIPA CITY—With a course that allows aggressive play, expect a shoot-out when the Philippine Open tees off today at Mount Malarayat.

The premium will be on scoring, with little need for trouble-shooting, and the big guns agree that this could be one of the lowest scoring Opens in recent memory as 156 players bannered by Asia's best chase $31,500 in champion's money.

Unlike in past Opens when par was a good score, players have the chance to shoot at pins and go really low.

Fifty-six Filipinos made the list led by in-form Angelo Que and former winners Cassius Casas, Gerald Rosales and Robert Pactolerin.

The last Filipino to win this event was Rosales at The Riviera in 2000, and Que feels the locals don't have that much of an advantage in layout familiarity.

"They (foreigners) have been here since Monday and know the course well," Que said. "The heat will now be our only advantage."

The Mt. Makulot and Mt. Lobo nines were sampled by players who competed in the Celebrity Pro-Am and under-par cards were turned in by teams as the winds, usually Malarayat's defense, were not present.

Que tees off at 12:20 p.m. together with Thai star Prom Meesawat and Marcus Both of Australia.

Juvic Pagunsan is also commanding curiosity, with people expecting him to better a second place finish behind Edward Michaels last year.

The 26-year-old Pagunsan could be seeing action in his last Open as an amateur and he will be using this event to toughen up for the Southeast Asian Games later this year.

The $200,000 Asian Tour tilt is co-presented by San Miguel Corp. and ICTSI, with Pagcor., PAL, Hanjin heavy industries and construction company limited, Aboitiz Group, Petron Blaze, PCSO, the Department of Tourism and Malarayat Hotel and Inn as backers.

Omega is the official timer and is a partner of the event like BMG Solar, Konica U-Bix, Human by Bench, Universal Robina Corp., Centennial Savings Bank, Patio Pacific of Boracay and Mizuno.

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Yee paces Montecillo tilt with 67

MIKO Yee fired a five-under-par 67 to surge ahead by four strokes in boys action after the first round of the qualifying stage of the Philippine Junior Golf Championships: The Montecillo Cup Tuesday at the Legends course of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club in Carmona, Cavite.

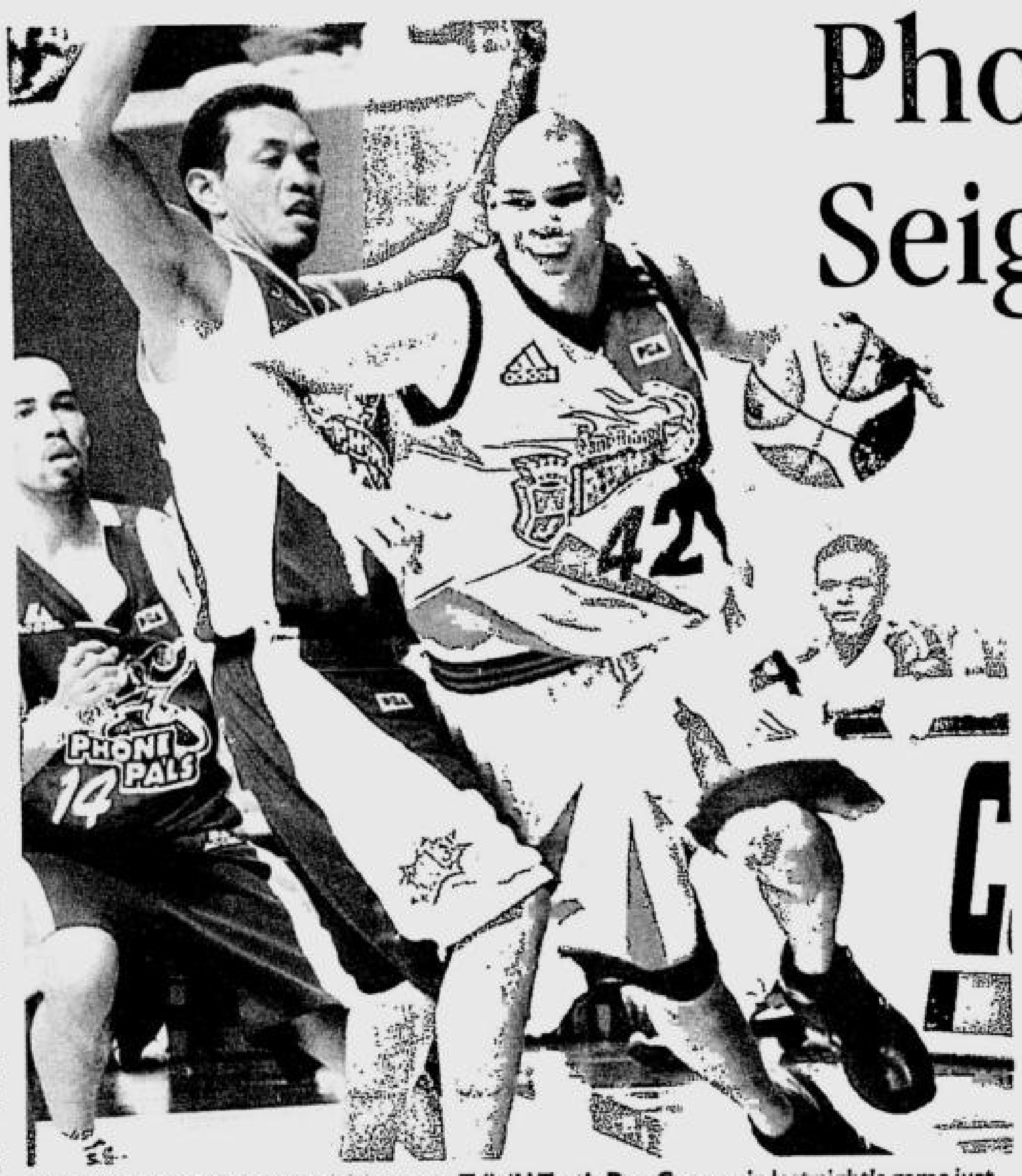
Yee's superb round at his home course gave him the edge in the chase for the 16 slots for the match play tournament proper set immediately after the second round Wednesday.

Miko Alejandro was running second with a 71 while Gabe Villareal and Justin Tambunting had 72s in the event, the second major leg of the Samsung Jungolf Tour being backed by Philippine Airlines with Titleist/Dynamic Sports Corp., Toyota Motor Phils., Corp. and Unilever as minor sponsors.

Amalia Montecillo, the founder of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines in whose honor the tourney is being staged for the first time, graced the inaugurals with Jungolf president Raoul Lachica and former presidents Gerry Handog and Luigi Tabuena.

Also looming as an outside threat was 12-year-old Wolen Superal who shot a 74. John Kier Abdon, Marcel Puyat and Lawrence Celestino had similar 76s.

Regan de Guzman matched par 72 to lead the girls division where the top eight players will qualify for the next stage.



DANNY Seigle of San Miguel drives past Talk 'N Text's Don Camaso in last night's game just moments before he sprained his ankle.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Phone Pals trip Seigle-less SMB

GAMES TODAY (CEU Malolos, Bulacan)
4 p.m.—Red Bull Barako vs Coca-Cola
6:35 p.m.—Purefoods vs FedEx

By June Navarro

IT TOOK one sprained ankle to remove the thorn from Talk 'N Text's side.

Jerald Honeycutt essayed the role of an executioner as the Phone Pals exploited a Danny Seigle-less San Miguel Beer, 100-94, in the 2005 Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

Seigle twisted his right ankle in a collision with Victor Pablo late in the second period, clearing away a large chunk of the Phone Pals' defensive concerns on the way to their 11th victory in 16 games.

And with only two games left before wrapping up the classification round of the eliminations, the Phone Pals moved a win closer to securing one of the top two slots going into the next phase.

"We were lucky. He (Seigle) was not able to contribute anymore in the second half," said Talk 'N Text coach Joel Banal, whose Phone Pals are now two full games ahead of San Miguel and Alaska to keep the pole position.

Seigle was immediately brought to the hospital for X-ray and doctors suspected a third-degree sprain that could put the San Miguel's go-to guy on the sidelines for weeks.

Seigle, the conference's leading scorer (24.8 points per game), finished with just six points, four rebounds, two assists and one steal in 20 minutes before he was carried off the court.

Honeycutt hit 11 of his 21 points in the final quarter and fed his teammates several nifty passes as the Phone Pals broke away, 84-74, from a slim 74-72 count. Honeycutt also had 12 rebounds, six assists, five steals and one block.

Donbel Belano and Niño Gelig also gave the Phone Pals a huge lift in the backcourt to offset Jimmy Alapag's third straight absence. Mark Telan had 21 points while Willie Miller and Harvey Carey had 11 and nine points each.

"Donbel and (Niño) Gelig filled in the shoes of Jimmy," said Banal. Alapag remains suspended pending the completion of his citizenship papers.

Talk 'N Text is now 7-2 since Honeycutt took over from Noel Felix early in the conference. The Phone Pals have won 16 of their last 20 games with Honeycutt dating back to last year's Fiesta Conference.

The scores:

First Game

TALK 'N TEXT 100—Telan 21, Honeycutt 21, Miller 11, Carey 9, Gelig 8, Pablo 8, Belano 8, Camaso 7, De Ocampo 5, Fran 2.

SAN MIGUEL 94—Hontiveros 29, Belasco 24, Pena 13, Burgess 11, Racela 6, Seigle 6, Lopez 3, Ildefonso 2, Mente 0.

Quarters: 21-25, 45-48, 74-72, 100-94.

BAP pushing through with Champions Cup

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE BASKETBALL Association of the Philippines won't let the POC suspension dangling over its head get in the way of its plans, programs and commitments.

BAP executive vice president Christian Tan yesterday said the BAP will push through with the 16th Fiba Asia Champions Cup on May 27 to June 5 at the Araneta Coliseum, even inviting President Macapagal-Arroyo to be the guest of honor in the inaugural rites.

Tan said the BAP had already related its impending suspension by the Philippine Olympic Committee to Fiba-Asia, which he said would only make an advice if the suspension is implemented.

POC president Peping Cojuangco last Tuesday said the POC expanded executive council is recommending the suspension of the BAP in its May 25 general assembly. There are already 20 members in the EEC, just six votes short of the required number of votes—¾ of the voting members or 26 of 39—to impose the embargo on BAP.

"This is a Fiba (international basketball federation) and BAP undertaking and not a POC or IOC (International Olympic Committee) affair," said Tan, who added they will just plot the association's next move when the POC general assembly decides on the BAP's fate on May 25.

Nevertheless, Tan sought the support of the POC for the event which he said will be the key to the country's bid to host the 2007 Fiba-Asia championship for men—the qualifying event for the 2008 Olympics.

"The BAP may be under fire these days but we are putting that aside in lieu of this big commitment," said Tan during the press conference. "So much is at stake here that we and, I believe, the POC will work together in the name of national pride and honor."

He added that the country will be represented by the same team pooled by national coach Chot Reyes, who Tan claimed, intends to use the event to size up the competition they would be facing when the country competes in the ABC championship in Doha, Qatar, late this year.

The Philippines is joined by defending champion Sagesse-Lebanon, Tobol-Kazakhstan, Iran and India in Group A. Syria, AlRayyan-Qatar, Kuwait Club and fast Link-Jordan are in Group B, in accordance with the draw held in Kuala Lumpur.

PSC to respect assembly decision on cage fiasco

THE PHILIPPINE Sports Commission yesterday threw its support to the Philippine Olympic Committee regarding the impending suspension it is set to impose on the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

PSC officer in charge Butch Ramirez, who celebrated his 55th birthday yesterday, said he will respect whatever the decision the POC general assembly will make regarding the BAP fiasco when it convenes on May 25.

"It is the norm that whatever the recommendation of the POC, we will always support and cooperate with them," said Ramirez, who just the same hoped that the matter would be resolved soon.

The PSC supports at least two national basketball teams, excluding their international exposure and tournament hosting, as part of its mandate to fund national sports associations endorsed by the POC.

"The PSC board would like to see to it that it would be settled swiftly for the benefit of the athletes. This is the time where role models in sports should be seen," added Ramirez.

Meanwhile, the POC official reported the completion of the tennis center and the start of the refurbishing of the track oval inside the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex which will be used in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

Ramirez also bared that 200 athletes have transferred to the Philsports, which will be transformed to an "Olympic Village" of the Filipino athletes.

Marc Anthony Reyes

Panabo, P. Princesa, Palawan bets score

By Dennis U. Eroa
Inquirer Libre sports editor

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—After a slow start, defending champion Panabo went full throttle, going six of six in Day Two of the National Youth and Women's Amateur Boxing Championships Tuesday night at the Puerto Princesa Coliseum.

Not to be left behind, boxers from this award-winning city and the province of Palawan also delighted the home crowd as they posted preliminary victories in this week-long tournament under the auspices of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines and the city government under Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn.

Cadiz City also shone as Arman Alpar entered the semifinals of the kids division (29 kg) with a referee stopped contest (RSC) victory over Arnel Tapang of Mandaluyong City. Alpar joined Julius Espelita (school boys 42 kgs) and Mark Joseph Parrenas (kids, 27 kg) in the semis.

Advancing to the next round for Panabo were Mark Anthony Barriga (kids, 26 kg), Radjie Tabanao (kids, 29 kg), Rolando Saiden (cadet, 48 kg), Jonathan Tawan and Regie Viradorn (cadet, 46 kg) and Glen Canteveros (school boys, 43 kg).

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May 21 and 22, 4:00-6:00PM

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Semi Finals: May 22, 10:00-11:00am
Finals: May 22, 1:00-2:00 pm

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Olympic champ leads badminton exhibition showdown

TOP-NOTCH badminton action will kick off this weekend as Asia's top shuttlecock artists strut their stuff in an exhibition showdown in the INQUIRER Badminton Expo at the Megatrade Hall 2 in SM Megamall.

Olympic badminton champion Taufik Hidayat and Yonex All-England champion Hafiz Hashim will lead the members of the Philippine national team in Toby's Sports Exhibition Match on May 21 and 22 at 4 p.m.-6 p.m.

The 23-year-old Hidayat, who also won the Indonesia Open five times, bagged the men's singles title in the 2004 Olympics.

Hashim, Malaysia's 22-year-old sensation, ranks ninth in the world.

Hoping to inspire more local players, Philippine badminton team coach Martin Araneta will also conduct a badminton clinic on May 21 and 22 at 2 p.m.-4 p.m.

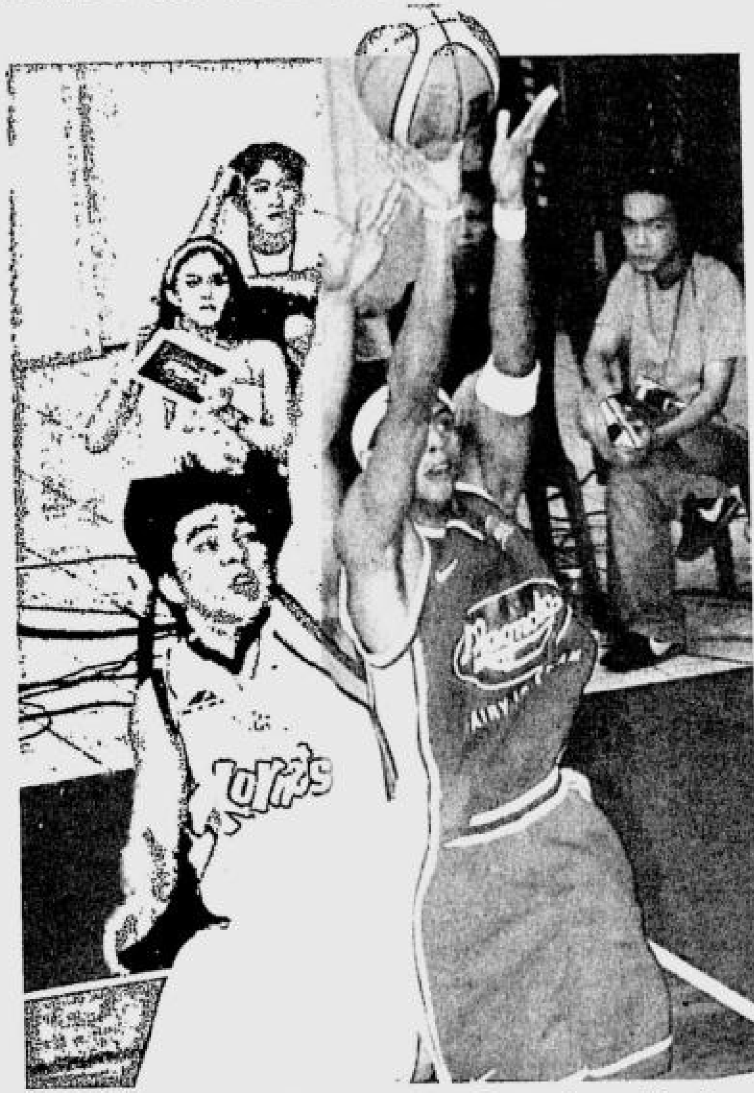
The Expo, which drew more than 10,000 enthusiasts last year, will again feature the INQUIRER Badminton Bulilit Tournament for children 10 years old and below. Eliminations will be held on May 20 (1 p.m.-8 p.m.) and the final round will be on May 22 (10 a.m.-2 p.m.).

This event co-presented by Toby's, in cooperation with adidas, will be offering big discounts on rackets, shoes, bags and other badminton gears from Mizuno, Prince, Wilson, Victor, Kason, Yonex, RSL, Carlton, Dunlop and Gosen.

Other expo participants include corporate giants Unilever and Epson along with Chris Sports, Sportshouse, Gerflor Taraflex, Holiday Inn, Wave 89.1 and Jam 88.3.

The first 100 visitors in the three-day expo will receive an INQUIRER Badminton body bag. Toby's, adidas and Wilson will also be giving away gift certificates and loot bags in the hourly raffle. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Harbour Centre tests Montaña mettle today


AUGUST DELA CRUZ

ARWIND Santos takes a jumper against a Granny Goose defender.

GAMES TODAY (*La Salle Greenhills Gym*)
2 p.m.—Bacchus vs Granny Goose
4 p.m.—Montaña vs Harbour Centre

COACH Tonichi Yturri doesn't seem worried when his Harbour Centre battles league-heavyweight Montaña Pawnshop for the first outright semifinal berth today.

Looking more relaxed at the bench lately, Yturri's confidence stems from the rapid improvement of his rookie team in the PBL Unity Cup.

"They are playing with lots of maturity and that showed during our last four games," said Yturri, who will again lean on hotshot duo Mac Cardona and LA Tenorio in the 4 p.m. tussle at the La Salle Greenhills Gym. "Everyone is contributing."

Granny Goose, which dropped its bid for a twice-to-beat edge in the quarterfinals, will face the eliminated Bacchus Energy Drink at 2 p.m.

Montaña and Harbour Centre were favored to claim the two outright semifinal seats, but Welcoat Paints tightened the race after drubbing Montaña, 81-74, last Tuesday.

If Welcoat scores another win against Nenaco-San Beda on Saturday, it will face the loser of the Montaña-Harbour Centre match for the remaining semifinal slot.

Montaña, though, will try to avoid complications behind sweet-shooting Alex Compton and last conference's Most Valuable Player, Jon Dan Salvador.

But Cardona, who appears to be in constant motion on court, has fearlessly challenged the veteran players. The fiery guard weathered physical games to lead the league in scores (23.1 points per game) and steals (2.5 spg).

The MVP pacesetter has also been getting ample help from Tenorio, who tops the league in assists at 5.1 apg.

The Portmasters will shoot for its fifth straight win with other collegiate standouts Gabby Espinas, Magnum Membrere and Jerwin Gaco also expected to contribute.

The Jewels, though, boasts a more seasoned support crew in Ariel Capus, Erick dela Cuesta, Reed Juntilla and Paul Guerrero.

Meanwhile, Granny Goose settled for the last slot in the quarterfinals after losing to Magnolia Ice Cream, 77-73, last Tuesday.

Although Granny Goose recently pulled upsets over Montaña and Welcoat, the stirring wins came late for this team that finished fourth in its debut last conference. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Larry, Ka Tino & Ben: RP Open legends

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

EACH time the Philippine Open comes along, the first thing that comes to my mind is Larry Montes. Larry was not only the first Filipino to win it. He also owns the most number of victories: 12.

Who can top that?

When I became a sportswriter and finally came to know about his feat, I searched for him. I scoured the ends of the Earth. No luck. I couldn't find him. Then a few years back, I learned he had died in America.

"He died in 1996," said Roger Flores of Manila Standard-Today. "I learned about it by accident. His son came home in 1997 to play in the PAL Interclub in Bacolod. I scooped you all in Bacolod that year with that story, remember?"

"Yeah, I remember that," said Jake Ayson. "That was the golden year of the PAL Interclub hosted by Bacolod's Negros Occidental GCC and Bacolod Golf and CC in Binitin."

"And what else would you remember about the 1997 PAL Interclub, Jake?" I said.

"There you go," Jake said. "You beat me by one stroke in the 36-hole PAL Media Tournament. You were down three strokes and your mighty rally made you a big winner. I remember that pretty well. PAL gave you two tickets for America instead of one because PAL felt extra generous since it was celebrating its golden anniversary that year, right?"

Sometime ago, a nephew of Larry Montes had come visiting. I wanted to interview him, but before I could get hold of him, he had flown home. And home was—you guessed it right—America.

"Larry's son said Larry Montes never left golf when he left for San Francisco to live there for good," said Roger Flores. "He regularly went to the driving range to teach those willing to listen to him even in his old age."

As the 89th edition of the Philippine Open unfolds today at the scenic Mount Malarayat in Lipa City in Batangas, I can't help but shoot to a flashback mode once again.

Hey, it's 1929. Larry Montes won the Philippine Open that year, 16 years after the Open began in 1913 at its first home—at the Manila Golf Club in Malabon.

It was a historic win as it marked the first time that a Filipino won it—after the Americans had dominated the first 16 editions of the Open.

Since Larry Montes was a caddy, organizers were placed in a quandary: the Manila Golf Club had a policy making its clubhouse off limits to caddies. That policy was waived (was it Bill Shaw who instigated it?) and Larry Montes got his championship trophy.

Larry Montes failed to defend his crown in 1930 and 1931 as the Open was cancelled. When the Open resumed in 1932, Larry Montes won again. Casiano Decena and Guillermo Navaja became the second and third Filipinos to win it—in 1934 and 1935, respectively. But Larry Montes won it back-to-back again in 1936 and 1937 before proceeding to win eight more times for a spectacular total of 12 RP Open titles. He also won in 1941, 1942, 1943 and 1944. There was no Open in the war years of 1945, 1946 and 1947. In 1948, Larry Montes prevailed anew, repeating it in 1949, 1955 and, finally, in 1956.

Celestino Tugot took over from Larry Montes, pocketing four straight RP Open crowns from 1957 en route to a total of six RP Open titles. Then, it was Ben Arda's turn to dominate the Open, winning a total of three. Yesterday, Ben Arda, 76, graced the Celebrity Pro-Am as one of those who hit ceremonial tee shots.

"I am touched that people handling the Open have not forgotten me," said Ben Arda, who slept at the hotel room of Jun Galindez (NGAP auditor) on the eve of the Pro-Am. "I will never forget this moment of my life."

Admiral Luisito Fernandez, chair of the RP Open organizing committee, had also invited Ka Tino Tugot to join yesterday's Pro-Am. However, the 91-year-old Tugot, the only Filipino golfer to have shaken the hand of an American president (Ike Eisenhower), is now a bit weak to leave his home in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon.

Peping Cojuangco, who played yesterday, would have been thrilled to see Ka Tino. You know why? They'd been Pro-Am partners nonstop for years before Father Time caught up with Ka Tino.

Ah, the Open. So rich in memories and legacies I can't stop loving it.

***

FASTBREAK. Thanks to Darwin Villa and Gani Aguilar of Mount Malarayat for their troubleshooting chores of communication lines at the Media Room. Splendid. Also to Mac Almosara of U-Bix Corp. for his expert handling of the computers, printers and fax machines provided, of course, by perennial golf patron Bert Bravo.

LA Gear leads opening day winners of cagefest

LA GEAR overpowered LLQC, 96-69, in the opening game of the Burlington Friendship Cup 2005 at the Phil Buddhacare Academy gym in Quezon City last Sunday.

LA Gear, a team owned by Thomas Lim, started big with a 17-0 run and never looked back en route to the lopsided victory over the Trogs. They were led by Ryan Poblete and Darryl Bautista with 16 and 13 points apiece. Other winners of the annual event backed by Memory Magic were defending champion GNC which trashed Shocks XT, 95-80, Wilcon Builders which upended Memory Magic, 83-74, Chloe Lighting which edged PRC Couriers, 83-80 and Phil Star which toyed with Monica Publishing in the battle of two newspaper outfits, 114-50. PBA top rookie draftee Rich Alvarez was the special guest during the glittering opening ceremonies of the event backed by Jimac and Accel. In the Bio-Fresh ladies free throw contest, Phil Star and GNC beat their opponents to make it a double celebration for their companies. In the other matches, LLQC, Memory Magic and PRC Couriers emerged victorious.

Action resumes on May 22 at the same venue with all ten teams playing in a five-game sked of the league organized by TEAMSPORTS for Burlington Industries Phils, Inc, also the maker of Puma, Bally, Slazenger and Camp socks.

TABLE TENNIS ACES: The Filipino-Chinese Athletic Federation has selected 10 outstanding table tennis players to undergo 15-day advance and basic summer training programs. The selection, sponsored by Angel Ngu, was organized by chair Joey Sy, Julian Ching, Charlie Lim and Philip Uy. (From left top row) Gregorio Pascua, Charmaine De Jesus, Charlie Lim, Julian Ching, Angel Ngu, Joel Sy, Floyd Lobaton, Alvin Chua and Philip Uy. (From left below) Jefferson De Jesus, Arlene Ng, Jayson Jaquilmo, Earl Tamationg, Marvin Carreon and Karl Uy.

SPORTSWATCH

New stars to emerge in 5th JVC Open

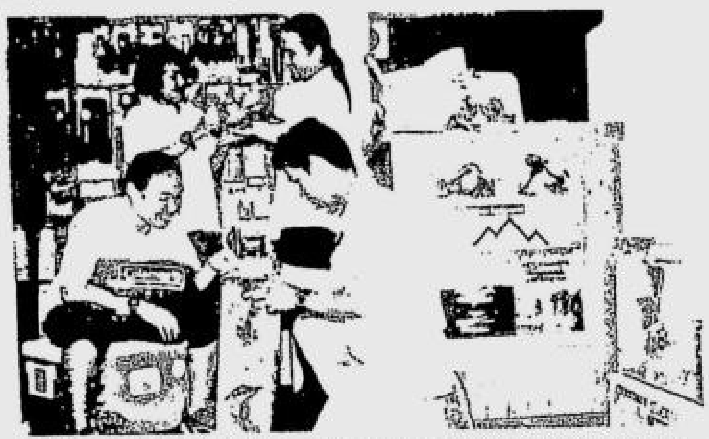
WITH the likes of Ian Piencenaves and Kennevic Asuncion to play in their own division, new stars are expected to emerge when the JVC Open Badminton Championships stages its fifth edition beginning July 4 at the Glorietta Activity Center. The organizing IMG, in a bid to level the playing field, has put up a separate tournament among the cream of the crop–the elite masters–exclusively for former and current members of the national team, varsity players and past JVC Open champions. They include Piencenaves, who won the men's singles crown back-to-back in 2002-03, and Asuncion, who reigned supreme in the inaugural staging of the event in 2001 and came back last year to re-assert his mastery over the field. That leaves the title hunt in the elite division (non-pro) wide open. For details, call/text Joann at 0918-5094845 or Agnes at 0919-8353689; Nelson Asuncion (725-2568 or 0917-528-8970) or IMG at 751-6751/52, 845-0162 (telefax) or e-mail at jenriquez@imgworld.com or visit www.jvcbadminton.com.

La Salle spikers eye share of lead

TOP PICK La Salle shoots for a share of the top spot with San Sebastian College as it takes on Far Eastern University today in the 2005 Shakey's V-League first conference at the Lyceum Gym. Backstopped by the power duo of Michelle Carolino and Maureen Penetrante, the Archers started their title-retention campaign in the tourney by walloping the Ateneo Eagles, 25-18, 25-23, 25-20, Saturday at the Loyola Gym. University of Santo Tomas, for its part, seeks to bounce back from a numbing 25-10, 21-25, 22-25, 14-25 upset loss to San Sebastian also on opening day as it takes on dangerous Lyceum at 2 p.m. The La Salle-FEU duel is set at 4 p.m. The Pirates and the Tams dropped their first games with the Pirates falling to the Eagles, 21-25, 27-29, 25-19, 25-22, 12-15, and the Tams bowing to the Stags, 18-25, 16-25, 25-22, 18-25, in this event bankrolled by Shakey's Pizza and supported by Accel, Mikasa, IBC 13 and Jemah Production.

Tagbanua native rules Karagatan tilt

PUERTO PRINCESA City—Rudy Bacaltos ruled the triathlon in the sixth annual Karagatan Festival held at the Tagkawayan City Beach here recently. Bacaltos, a tall, well-built Tagbanua native from Barangay Napsan, defeated Arturo Villanueva of Barangay Simpocan and Pecardo Martinez of Barangay Bagong Bayan to capture top honors in the event supported by San Miguel Corp., Smart, Norkis Yamaha, Fuego Water Resistant Safety Matches and Asian Spirit. Bacaltos made it a triple celebration when he teamed up with Villanueva to finish second overall in the Sagwanan doubles race. He also topped the palosebo open. Motocross legend Butch Chase and Manuel "Boy" Macasaet awarded the trophies and cash prizes to the winners of the different events. Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn lauded the organizers for the success of the event.



EXPEDITION BACKER: The 1st Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition is going full steam ahead in preparation of their historic climb to Mt. Everest in 2007. Coleman, represented in the Philippines by Focus Global Inc., has thrown its full support to the project. (From left) Noelle Wenceslao, Janet Bellarmino, Ariel Ambayec and Reggie Pablo visit a Coleman store to pick equipment they will bring on their next training climb to Katmandu, Nepal.

Magallanes golfers up by 7 points

MAGALLANES, behind a couple of 40-point outputs, grabbed the lead in the first round of the Nokia Intervillage central sector golf tournament at The Riviera's Couples course Monday. Brixton Aw and skipper Emil Alviar Jr. scored the maximum points under the Stableford scoring system for Magallanes, which also ruled this event exclusively for villages in Makati and Mandaluyong last year. Magallanes came up with 306 points and a seven-point lead over Hillsborough as Archie Rubio, Joseph Alviar and Mike Alviar each contributed 39 points, and Boy Tolentino, Porfirio Alviar and Tino Tolentino, chipped in 38, 37 and 34 points, respectively. Hillsborough assumed the challenger's role with a 299 anchored by Philip Brodett's 40 points.

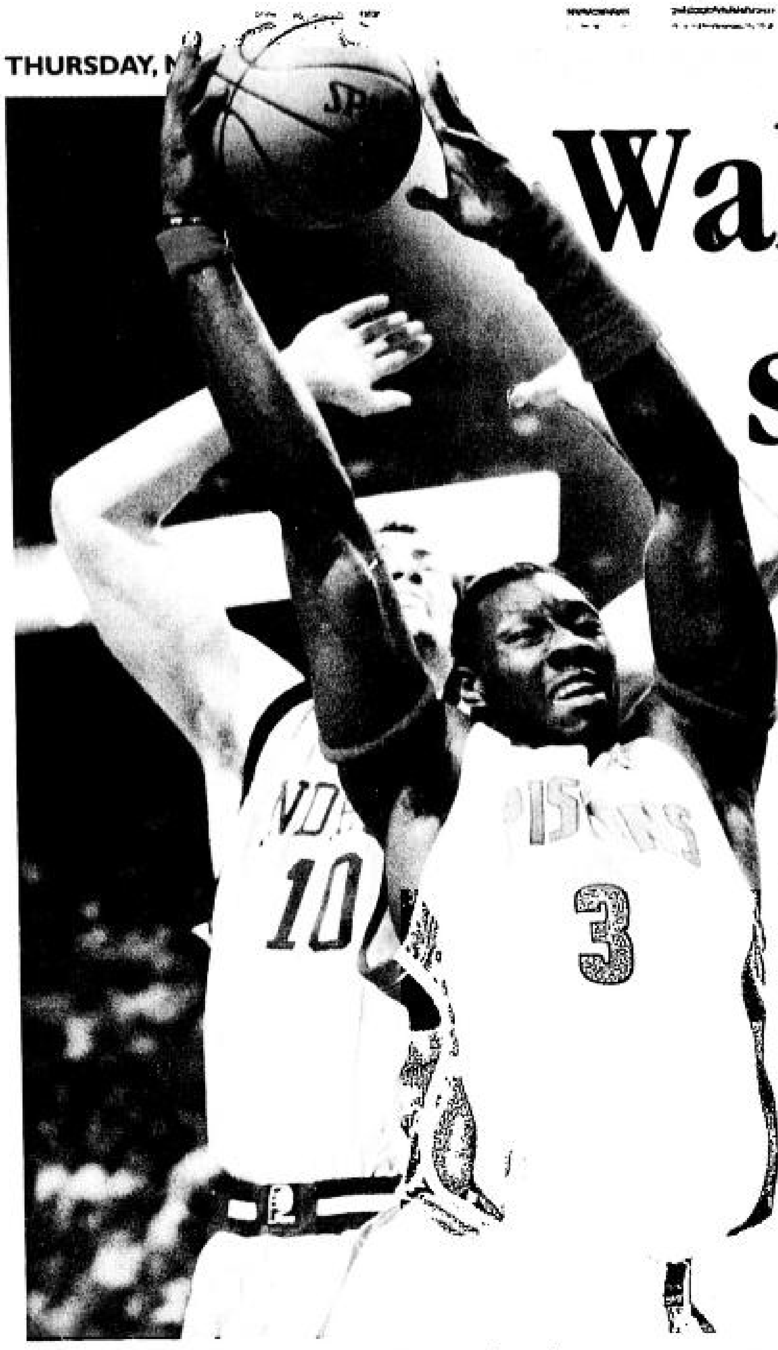
VICTORY IN GUAM: Touring Car Champ Carlos Anton of the Philippines steers his Subaru STI to victory in the street modified class during the final round of the Guam Autocross Series held on May 1. Anton beat the then undefeated Guam series Champion Adrian Banu.

Espina guns for another derby title

FRESH from bagging the National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-Cock Derby plum last week, Biliran Rep. Gerry "Boy" Espina guns for another title today as the NCA Derby championship gets going at the Araneta Coliseum. Espina's Mt. Panamao entry posted three wins Tuesday night, extending his winning streak to 10 counting the seven victories he posted last week, and is now one of the top contenders in the NCA Cocker of the Year race. Also with three points: PEBR Complexor 3000 Mulawin 4 of sabong idol Patrick Antonio, Wild Wing Sundance of Rep. Ronnie Puno and Boy Jiao and RT 114 Sabong Bulalayaw of JV Magsaysay and Ruel Ricafort. For inquiries, contact 911-3101 and 911-2928 (look for Gloria Avena).

Daytime 4-cocker at Sta. Ana Cockpit

PROVINCIAL entries have started to come in for the much-awaited "Daytime 4-Cock Derby" on May 26 and 28 at Sta. Ana Cockpit (A.P. Reyes Avenue, Makati City). Due to the big number of fights, pit manager Gerald Go said the derby will start at noon. The prize of P700,000 will be given to the winners regardless of the actual number of entries, said hosts Kags Paliza and Aba Badiola. Entry fee is P5,500. A bonus of P10,000 each await participants who will score two wins in the elimination round. Official entries must be submitted on May 25, from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. Interested parties may call 898-3474 and 898-3475 for details.



BEN WALLACE (3) pulls down an offensive rebound. REUTERS

Wallace, Ginobili spark big wins

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan—Ben Wallace had 19 points, 11 rebounds and three blocks Tuesday to lead Detroit to an 86-67 victory over the Pacers, and a 3-2 lead in the Eastern Conference semifinal.

"I just wanted to come out and be aggressive and get on the board," Wallace said. "We did a great job moving the ball from side to side and getting putbacks."

The Pistons held Indiana without a field goal for a stretch of 10:39—including the first 6:26 of the second half—turning a tie game into a 22-point Detroit lead. The defending NBA champions went on a 30-4 run over the second and third quarters.

It was a wave of championship basketball that the Pacers were unable to stop despite spending all eight of their timeouts before the end of the third quarter.

They were hit with a technical foul in the fourth quarter when they were assessed a mandatory timeout they did not have.

"I've never seen that. It blew me away," Pistons coach Larry Brown, whose NBA coaching career started in 1976, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I asked (official) Joe Crawford if he's ever seen it, and he said he hadn't in his 28 years."

Game 6 is Thursday night in Indianapolis.

"This is going to be a true test of our will," Indiana's Jermaine O'Neal said.

In San Antonio, Manu Ginobili celebrated his return to the starting lineup with a career playoff-best 39 points and San Antonio used a 17-3 third-quarter run to get past Seattle, 103-90, and take a 3-2 lead in the Western Conference semifinal.

"The most important thing was to attack," Ginobili said. "My biggest concern was to attack and draw fouls."

Ray Allen led Seattle with 19 points, but he was practically invisible in the first and third quarters.

Sonics forward Rashard Lewis missed his second straight game because of a sprained left big toe. He may return Thursday night for Game 6 in Seattle, when the Sonics try to stay alive.

Tim Duncan had 20 points and 14 rebounds for San Antonio, while Tony Parker was 4-of-13 for just 11 points on his 23rd birthday.

Ginobili had been coming off the bench since the Spurs lost the playoff opener. He started all 74 games he played in the regular season. Starting again, Ginobili was 10-of-15 from the field and 15-of-17 from the line. He also had six assists and four rebounds.

Playoff history is certainly on the side of the Pistons and the Spurs. Of the previous 123 series that were tied 2-2, the team that won Game Five has advanced on 103 occasions, or 84 percent of the time. *AP, AFP, Reuters*

GINOBILI: Career playoff-high REUTERS

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Pacquiao: Murad not my promoter

FILIPINO boxing icon Manny Pacquiao yesterday informed the media that his estranged American promoter Murad Muhammad remains fired and therefore not authorized to promote his next bout.

Pacquiao's public disclosure came after it was found out that Muhammad has been "claiming to other people" that he is still the boxer's promoter.

"I am writing to ask you to stop claiming to other people that M&M Sports is still my promoter," Pacquiao's statement read. "I have fired you and M&M Sports from that position because of, among other things, your participation in a fraud against me."

"As I sit here today with so much of my money being missing and having to pay a huge tax bill because you violated the law in not withholding my taxes. I still cannot believe how dishonest you were and how you violated my trust in you."

Pacquiao has sued Muhammad following his mammoth clash with Erik Morales, alleging the latter of pocketing the pay-per-view income derived from the bout, while at the same time blaming him for his tax woes with the Internal Revenue Service.

"I want you to hear this loud and clear," Pacquiao said. "I am moving on with my career. My new management team has reached an oral agreement for my next two bouts, and I expect to sign a written agreement within the next two weeks. As of that time, not only will you remain fired, but there will be a different promoter formally representing me."

The Filipino southpaw is expected to fight this September against IBF junior lightweight boss Robbie Peden, before an anticipated clash with Morales. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

Bumgarner prevails

REIGNING Asian Karting queen Michelle Bumgarner survived the challenge of defending Karter of the Year Matteo Guidicelli of the Cebu Racing Group in the wild showdown that went down the wire yesterday to rule the third leg of the 2005 Shell Helix Superkarting Series at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Bumgarner and Guidicelli, the country's premiere karters also competing in the prestigious Italian Open Karting Championship, were never apart by more than a second throughout the entire 12-lap final race of this event sponsored by the Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation, Denso Iridium Power, Bridgestone by Phil. Allied Ent. Corp., DMCI Homes, Eastway Motorcycle Racing, Khaos, Aeromed and Aviva Insurance.

Bumgarner defeated Guidicelli by just 0.004 seconds.

Indy Villalon of Birel-Fila, Mark Bumgarner of M&M Racing and Marlon Stockinger of Birel-SFIC wound up third, fourth and fifth, respectively.

BUSINESSMAN Emmanuel "Dodo" Atienza (middle), jockey Val Dilema (left) and trainer Jeff Pabilic show off their winner's trophy after their horse, Stowaway Lass, ruled the second leg of the 2005 Imported Stakes race series last Sunday at the San Lazaro Leisure Park.

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Question of the Week
More than 90 journalists have been killed in the Philippines since 1986. The Committee to Protect Journalists has identified the Philippines as "the most murderous country for journalists," followed by Iraq, Colombia, Bangladesh and Russia. What should be done to stop the killings?
Senders of d best 20 texts as publishd in Tuesday's InqBox *wil each receiv an *Inquirer Mug! Ü*

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DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

. . . and Liezl M's heartbreak over the FAP rites

PRINCESS Punzalan married Jay, her boyfriend of two-and-a-half years, in Boracay on May 14. It was a sunset wedding attended by only the couple's closest friends and relatives. Some of their guests were Pops Fernandez, Gary and Angeli Valenciano, Rustom Padilla, Direk Wenn Deramas and Lyka Ugarte. Cess' brother Paolo gave her away.

Unlike most celebrity weddings that turn into carnivals, the ever-simple Cess made sure that the rites were kept solemn and private—sans fanfare but with so much emotion. The couple cried during the entire ceremony.

Nothing showbiz, all heartfelt.

A few months back, Princess' ex-husband Willie also tied the knot, with Liz Almoro. I'm sure that Willie wishes her and Jay well. Their marriage may have ended but not their friendship.

Congrats, my dear sis Cess and Jay!

Cess, no doubt your mom and dad are nodding in approval from up above. You will always be their princess even now that your prince has finally come.

Guess list

Guess who this lady nominee is! She asked her assistant to collect her gift bag during the Film Academy awards. To avoid confusion, the FAP staff were handing the loot bags only to the nominees themselves—no proxies allowed. When Ms. Nominee found out that they refused to hand hers over, she screamed like a madwoman and cursed the FAP people, who were just following instructions from higher-ups.

Funny thing is, she didn't make a fuss when she lost in her category. Did she get all dolled up for the awards night just for the pricey loot bag and not for the trophy?

Guess who this young actress/TV host is! Right after the FAP awards, Ms. Pretty Young Thing went to a hard-core gay party. She was terribly out of place. As one gay put it, "She didn't even bother to change. She was still wearing her awful gown. What was she thinking? Bad outfit! Bad hair! Wrong venue!"

Maybe she's a frustrated drag queen, huh?

Liezl's lament

Still on the FAP, my heart goes out to my *kumare*, Liezl Martinez because of all the undeserved flak she's been getting since the awards night. Some sectors insist she snubbed so many people like a prima donna that night. Liezl and her husband Albert were in charge of the event. That night she wasn't feeling well and yet she turned up, to show her support.

She recounted: "I couldn't socialize much and greet all the important people 'cause I had stomach flu. I had to go to the bathroom 12 times. My doctor wanted to put me on dextrose. Once I was seated, I didn't stand anymore because my knees were shaking. When the awards was over I went straight to my hotel room. I didn't even get to eat my dinner. *Sana naman*, before people judge me they find out the real story first. *Pinaghirapan namin ni* Albert *'yung* FAP because we wanted to give something back to the industry that has fed our family."

I've known Liezl since we were teenagers. She only looks *suplada*, but when you get to know her, she's the warmest person you could ever meet. During the FAP night, she was indeed physically weak. But since the event was a product of their blood, sweat and tears, Liezl stayed on like a real trooper. After all, she's a true child of show biz. It's the world she grew up in. There's no way she would deliberately alienate herself from show biz folk just for the heck of it.

Lito Lapid's calvary

I can sense the sincerity of Senator Lito Lapid in the ongoing discussions of the jueteng controversy. Why should he inhibit himself from the inquiry? That would only mean that he's hiding something.

He deserves a fair chance. He's not one to pretend he knows it all. In fact he has no qualms about not being comfy with English. He tells it like it is in street-wise Tagalog with Kapampangan accent.

Some people insist that Senator Lito is doing a Pontius Pilate but isn't he the one going through Calvary with all the unfounded accusations against him?

(For feedback, e-mail wateringhole-shangrila@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com)

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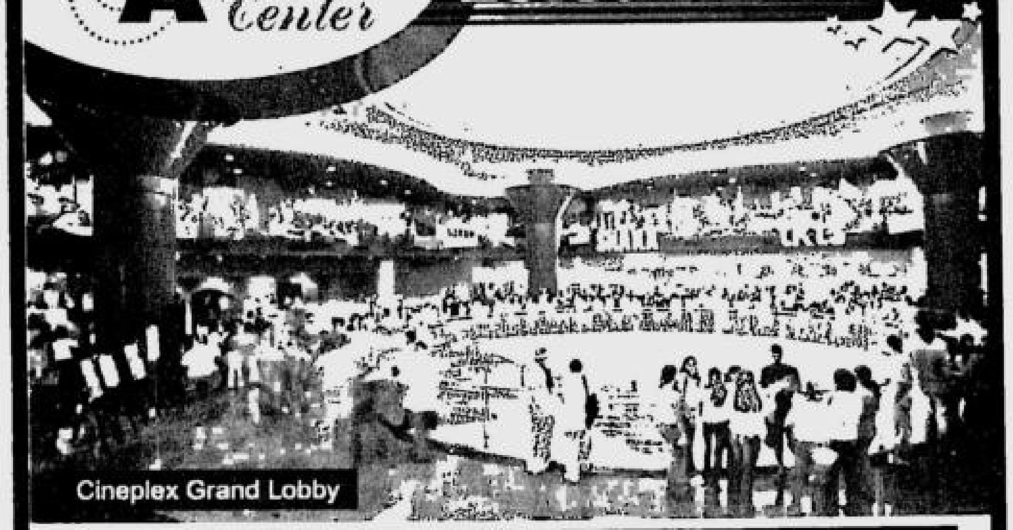

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12:30 / 2:40 / 4:50 / 7:00 / 9:10
GUESS WHO
1:50 / 4:10 / 6:30 / 8:50
IN GOOD COMPANY
AMITYVILLE HORROR
STAR WARS - EPISODE III
11:50 / 2:50 / 5:50 / 8:50
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❶ STAR WARS - EPISODE III
11:55 / 2:50 / 5:45 / 8:40
❷ KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
11:00 / 2:00 / 5:00 / 8:00
❸ XXX 2: THE NEXT LEVEL
12:50 / 2:45 / 4:40 / 6:35 / 8:30
❹ CAN THIS BE LOVE
1:00 / 3:20 / 5:40 / 8:00
❺ BIKINI OPEN
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'WE HAVE KEPT OUR LOVE'
Brad Pitt says he's still proud of his relationship with Jennifer Aniston, four months after they separated. In an interview in GQ magazine, on newsstands tomorrow, Pitt says: "We've done it our way, and I love her for that. We've kept the love we have for each other." But he says he is "interested in other things now—like family." AP

All AI bets are off

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

AT the start of the finals round of "American Idol," we thought we had the singing search all figured out. Our top finalists were **Constantine Maroulis**, **Carrie Underwood**, **Vonzell Solomon**, and **Anthony Federov**, with **Bo Bice** and **Anwar Robinson** completing our Top Six.

Well, Anwar eventually fell away, but that wasn't so bad because he wasn't among our four "top-top" choices. Then came the terrible day when Constantine was so cruelly booted out by the show's millions of text-voters.

Hey, Constantine was a possible grand champion in our book, so why was he being blithely dismissed so relatively early in the finals?

To make things worse, he even lost to Scott Savol, who hadn't impressed us all that much from the git-go. Were the show's text-voters out of their minds?

Granted, Constantine's choice of song that fateful week was pretty bad, but whatever happened to fan loyalty in the face of adversity? Other top finalists had had their bad weeks, too, but their boosters didn't desert *them*.

Anyway, after Constantine bit the dust so prematurely, we realized that there was no second-guessing the outcome of "American Idol" this year. (Last year, **Fantasia Barino** was our top bet from the very start.)

No, this year, we have to be prepared to see the show's text-voters do their worst rather than their best. So, the 2005 grand champion may not be the best or most deserving finalist, just the prime beneficiary of the text-voters' whimsical verdict.

In any case, we'll continue to watch the show's final elimination process proceed inexorably to its denouement, but with less excitement and involvement.

When **Anthony Federov** was eliminated last week, we took the verdict in stride, and hoped that the likable youth would still have a good show biz career despite his defeat.

We also noted that, now that the Top Three consisted of Bo, Carrie and Vonzell, the women in the show had effectively turned the male finalists' initial advantage around. There had been a time in the finals when the males surpassed the females in number almost two to one, but that's clearly no longer the case. Good for you, ladies!

Now, for our prediction of the top winner: If the 2005 show's partiality for rockers continues, Bo could be it. Ever since, Carrie has been a top favorite.

As for Vonzell, she's been coming into her own more strongly in recent weeks (a juror even complimented her for her "perfect vocals"—you can't get a better rave than that), so she could well win the competition.

On the *other* hand, there are viewers who believe that she won't win because Fantasia was black, and you can't have two black winners in a row.

On the *other* hand, the year before Fantasia won, the winner was Ruben Studdard—and *he* was black, too—so, the "no two blacks in a row" rule obviously doesn't hold!

On the other, *other* hand, people are now saying that you can't have *three* black winners in a row. We give up!

You see what happens when text-voters can no longer be trusted to vote wisely and well? Let's just switch off and let things take their course, shall we? Anyway, the three remaining finalists are worthy winners, one and all. So, all bets are off.

Corrections

THANKS to **Gerard Gumban** for these corrections on our article on sci-fi movies last Saturday: It was Anakin Skywalker, not Luke Skywalker, who was transformed into Darth Vader in "Star Wars."

And, in "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," the protagonist is not played by Morgan Freeman, but by a white actor.

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 STAR WARS III
MTRCB: GP
12:15, 3:20, 9:30

2 STAR WARS III
MTRCB: GP
1:15, 4:20, 7:25, 10:30

3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
MTRCB: PG-13
12:45, 3:50, 6:55, 10:00

4 STAR WARS III
MTRCB: GP
1:45, 4:50, 7:55, 11:00

PREMIERE THEATRE
STAR WARS III
MTRCB: GP 11:45, 2:50, 5:55, 9:00

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11:00, 2:00, 5:00
8:00, 11:00
PG-13

2 IN GOOD COMPANY
10:50, 1:35, 4:20
7:05
PG-13

3 AMITYVILLE HORROR
12:55, 3:20, 5:45
8:10
R-13

4 HOUSE OF WAX
(SNEAK PREVIEW)
12:30, 3:05, 5:40
8:15, 10:50
R-13

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STAR WARS: EPISODE III GP 12:55,3:50,6:45,9:40	STAR WARS: EPISODE III GP 1:30,4:35,10:15	STAR WARS: EPISODE III GP 11:45,2:40,5:35
STAR WARS: EPISODE III GP 12:20,3:15,6:10,9:05		STAR WARS: EPISODE III GP 11:10,2:05,5:00,10:50

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5 Star Wars Episode 3
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2 Bikini Open
3 Under Renovation
4 Under Renovation
5 Star Wars Episode 3
6 Kingdom of Heaven

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KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
PG 13

CINEMA 4
STAR WARS : EPISODE III - GP
12:20, 3:05, 5:50,
8:35, 11:20

CINEMA 5
STAR WARS : EPISODE III - GP
11:10, 1:55, 4:40,
7:25, 10:10

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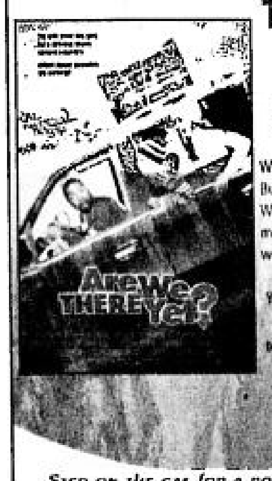

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2. STAR WARS III
11:40 FS / 12:10 MF / 2:50 / 5:30 / 8:10
10:20 LFS / 11:00 LMF / 1:10 END
633-8875

sm megamall cinema 1
THE INTERPRETER
12:00 FS / 12:35 MF / 3:10 / 5:45
7:55 LFS / 8:20 LMF / 10:30 END
STAR WARS III
[illegible]
633-1901

sm manila cinema 6
STAR WARS: EPISODE III
10:10 FS / 10:25 MF / 1:10 / 3:55 / 6:40
3:05 LFS / 3:25 LMF / 12:05 END
523-9240

sm cebu cinema
CINEMA 1: STAR WARS: EPISODE III
10:40 FS / 10:50 MF / 1:00 / 3:50 / 6:20
8:35 LFS / 8:50 LMF / 11:05 END
CINEMA 3: STAR WARS: EPISODE III
11:20 FS / 11:30 MF / 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00
9:15 LFS / 9:30 LMF / 11:45 END
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METRO MANILA

sm megamall
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 AMITYVILLE HORROR
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 STAR WARS: EPISODE III
5 CAN THIS BE LOVE
6 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
7 RESERVED
8 RESERVED
9 RESERVED
10 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
11 TRUMPETS
12 BIKINI OPEN

sm city fairview
1 THE PACIFIER
2 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
3 IN GOOD COMPANY
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
5 THE AMITYVILL HORROR
6 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
7 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
8 STAR WARS : EPSIDE III
9 AMITYVILLE HORROR
10 xXx 2 : THE NEXT LEVEL
11 ARE WE THERE YET
12 BIKINI OPEN

sm city north edsa
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
3 RESERVED
4 xXx 2: THE NEXT LEVEL
5 BIKINI OPEN
6 THE AMITYVILLE
7 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
8 STAR WARS : EPISODE III

sm city manila
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 AMITYVILLE HORROR
3 RING OF NIBELUNGS
4 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
5 POOH HEFFALUMP
6 STAR WARS: EPISODE III
7 xXx2 : THE NEXT LEVEL
8 IN GOOD COMPANY
9 STAR WARS: EPISODE III
10 THE WEDDING DATE
11 THIS CAN BE LOVE
12 BIKINI OPEN

sm city sta. mesa
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 RESERVED
5 RESERVED
6 CAN THIS BE LOVE
7 AMTIVYLLE HORROR
8 IN GOOD COMPANY
9 STAR WARS: EPISODE III
10 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

sm city southmall
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
5 CAN THIS BE LOVE
6 xXx 2 : THE NEXT LEVEL
7 BIKINI OPEN
8 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
9 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
10 AMITYVILLE HORROR

sm city bicutan
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 STAR WARS : EPISODE III

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 KINDOM OF HEAVEN
2 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 BIKINI OPEN

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 CAN THIS BE LOVE
5 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
6 BIKINI OPEN

sm city baguio
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BOOGEYMAN
3 BIKINI OPEN
4 STAR WARS: EPISODE III

sm city batangas
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 BOOGEYMAN

sm city dasmariñas
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 STAR WARS : EPISODE III

sm city marilao
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 STAR WARS : EPISODE III

sm city bacoor
1 ANG LAGUSAN
2 AMITYVILLE HORROR
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
5 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
6 BIKINI OPEN
7 CAN THIS BE LOVE
8 IN GOOD COMPANY

sm city lucena
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE
2 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
3 BIKINI OPEN
4 ALONE IN THE DARK

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 RESERVED
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
5 SIX
6 HONEY
7 BIKINI OPEN
8 STAR WARS : EPISODE III

sm city iloilo
1 THE INTERPRETER
2 RESERVED
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 SAHARA
5 SIX
6 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
7 RESERVED
8 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

sm city davao
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 GUESS WHO
5 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
6 STAR WARS: EPISODE III

sm city cagayan de oro
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BOOGEYMAN
3 SAHARA
4 STAR WARS : EPISODE III

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2 STAR WARS Episode III
11:10 2:00 4:50
3 STAR WARS Episode III
1:00 3:50 6:40 9:30
4 BIKINI OPEN
5 STAR WARS Episode III
10:40 1:30 4:20
6 GUESS WHO
7 AMITYVILLE HORROR
8 IN GOOD COMPANY
9 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
10 XXX 2

ERMITA
536-7809 to 12

1 STAR WARS Episode III
2 AMITYVILLE HORROR
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 IN GOOD COMPANY
5 STAR WARS Episode III
6 BIKINI OPEN
7 STAR WARS Episode III

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1 AMITYVILLE HORROR
2 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
3 IN GOOD COMPANY
4 STAR WARS Episode III
5 STAR WARS Episode III
6 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
7 BIKINI OPEN
8 STAR WARS Episode III

NOVALICHES
935-3229/31

1 STAR WARS Episode III
2 XXX 2
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 AMITYVILLE HORROR
5 BIKINI OPEN
6 STAR WARS Episode III
7 RESERVE
8 RESERVE

PIONEER
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1 STAR WARS Episode III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 AMITYVILLE HORROR
4 STAR WARS Episode III

CITISQUARE MALABON
288-2575

1 TAGOS SA LAMAN
2 SAMARA RING 2
3 STAR WARS Episode III
4 STAR WARS Episode III

CAINTA
240-4861

1 STAR WARS Episode III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 STAR WARS Episode III

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2 TAGOS SA LAMAN / STAR WARS III
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 BIKINI OPEN
5 STAR WARS Episode III

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2 BIKINI OPEN
3 THE INTERPRETER
4 GUESS WHO?
STAR WARS Episode III

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1 STAR WARS Episode III
2 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
3 BIKINI OPEN
4 STAR WARS Episode III
5 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
6 IN GOOD COMPANY

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(045) 961-5270

1 GUESS WHO?
2 SIX
3 BIKINI OPEN
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
5 STAR WARS Episode III
6 STAR WARS Episode III

BACOLOD
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1 STAR WARS Episode III
2 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
3 STAR WARS Episode III
4 SAHARA
5 THE WEDDING DATE
6 THE INTERPRETER

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2 THE INTERPRETER
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 STAR WARS Episode III
5 SAHARA
6 THE WEDDING DATE

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 STAR WARS EP. 3	2 STAR WARS EP. 3	3 THX STAR WARS EP. 3 12:10, 3:00, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR	5 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN	6 STAR WARS EP. 3	7 STAR WARS EP. 3
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 STAR WARS EP. 3 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 8:15	2 STAR WARS EP. 3 2:10, 5:00, 10:40					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX STAR WARS EP. 3 1:40, 4:30, 10:10 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX STAR WARS EP. 3 1:40, 4:30, 10:10 GUARANTEED SEATS	3 STAR WARS EP. 3 1:10, 4:00, 6:50,9 40, 12:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 STAR WARS EP. 3 12:40, 3:30, 6.20,9 10, 12:00 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 STAR WARS EP. 3 12:15, 3:05, 6 55, 11:35 GUARANTEED SEATS		
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⑦ Star Wars Episode III

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No to long-distance love

From page A30

working with director Wenn Deramas. He's really good. He has an eye for things that we normally don't see. [And] he gives me the liberty to do new things for my character. *Gustong-gusto ko*.

We shoot in Nagcarlan, Laguna, where the original "Kampañerang Kuba" was shot. We also have a set in Tagaytay and in Naic, Cavite. I've not seen the trailers. Hopefully, this will start airing first week of June.

Are you an exclusive talent of ABS-CBN now?

Yes. Actually, taping for this series started even before I signed my contract. I had asked permission from my former bosses [in GMA 7]. I'm now a Kapamilya. [Fortunately] I did not have any shows in GMA 7 when this was offered to me. *Hindi ako nambitin.* My last project with GMA 7 was 'Te Amo,' with Iza Calzado and Segundo Cernadas.

Are you still open to doing matinee idol roles?

I'm not closing the door. But I'd rather play offbeat characters [now]. At my age and with my experience, I think I will be more effective in character roles.

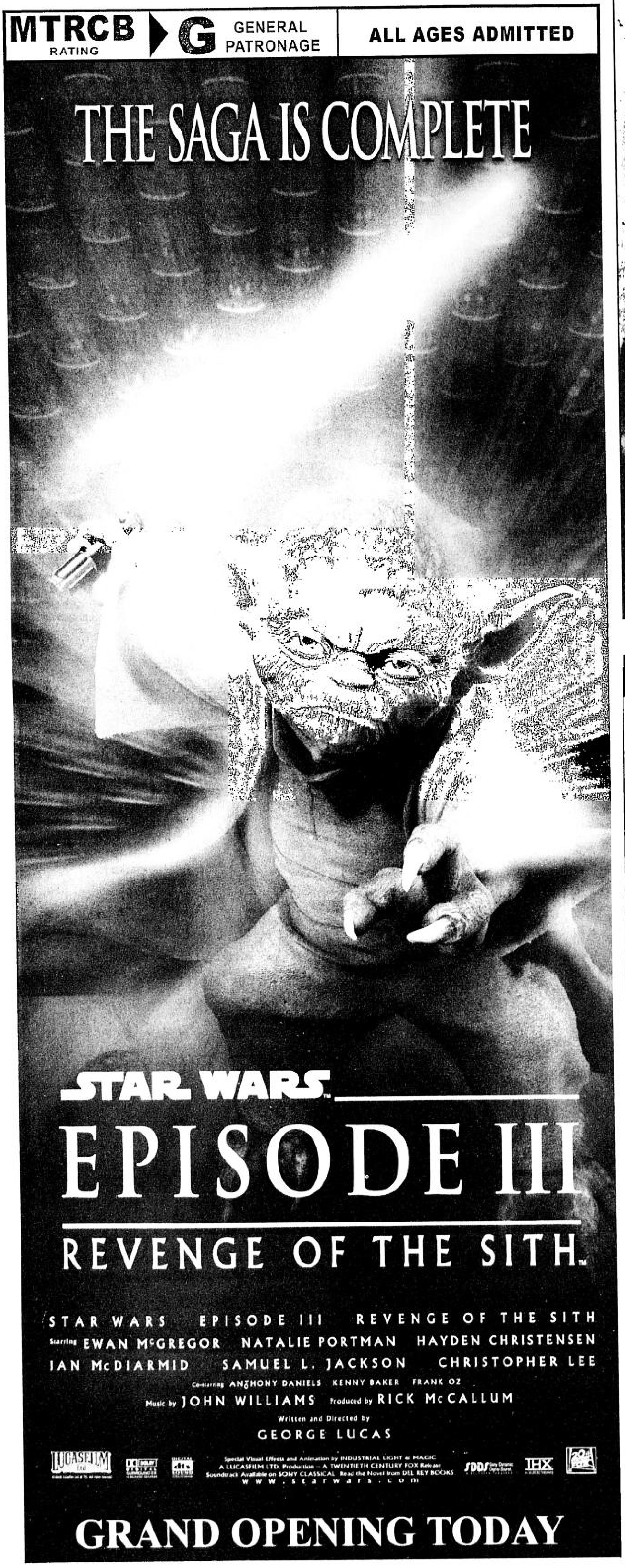
Would you encourage your son, Andre, 7, to follow in your footsteps?

He shows no interest yet. I think he's interested in car racing, just like me. I'd like him to finish his studies first. I don't want him to be working at a very young age. Experience has taught me that once you start working, *tuloy-tuloy na yan*. Your priorities change

I was 12 when I started. My first movies were "Regal Shocker" and "Emma Salazar." I finished high school. But I have no more plans of going to college. I'm now in the auto business.

If you were offered work with Ara Mina again, would you accept?

Work is just work to me. As long as the project is good, I'll accept—even if it's a romantic film.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NO RULES NO MERCY NO SURRENDER
JET LI
UNLEASHED
MORGAN FREEMAN BOB HOSKINS

No to long-distance love

By Marinel R. Cruz

JOMARI Yllana says he's comfortable being single. His rumored girlfriend, Danish beauty queen Thea Froejkaer, has gone back to her country.

"I'm not too comfortable with long-distance relationship," Jom tells a group of entertainment writers on Tuesday.

He recently ended a two-year relationship with sexy actress Ara Mina, whom he started seeing when he was still married to incumbent Quezon City councilor Aiko Melendez.

Of their breakup, which happened while they were promoting their last film, "Minsan Pa," Ara has said it was "an experience I would rather forget."

"We're not talking," Jom reveals. "We last spoke in November. I didn't greet her on her birthday (May 9), [though] of course I remembered. I just didn't want to disturb her."

The actor says his relationship with his former wife is now "a lot more enjoyable." He recently appeared on ABS-CBN's gag show, "Yes Yes Show," where Aiko is a regular host.

These days, the one thing that Jom is excited about is his new role in ABS-CBN's tele-serye "Kampañerang Kuba."

"I play Martin—he's scheming. No one knows how evil he's become. He came from another world. He's a prince in their planet, but he wants to become human. And for him to be one, he has to take the life of his whole kingdom, and he does. He brings all the riches of his kingdom with him when he comes to Earth. He builds a water system for an entire town, so the people like him.

TAKE FIVE

Is this your first *kontrabida* role?

I was one of the villains in GMA 7's soap, "Di Ba't Ikaw." That was back in 1997; it was a short stint.

Did you need prosthetics for this series?

Yes. You'll never recognize me. They make me look really ugly. It takes an hour and a half to put on my make-up and prosthetics."

What's the challenge for you here?

It's my first time to work with all of these people. I find it challenging to be

NO TO/ A29

JOMARI YLLANA

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J.E. SISON
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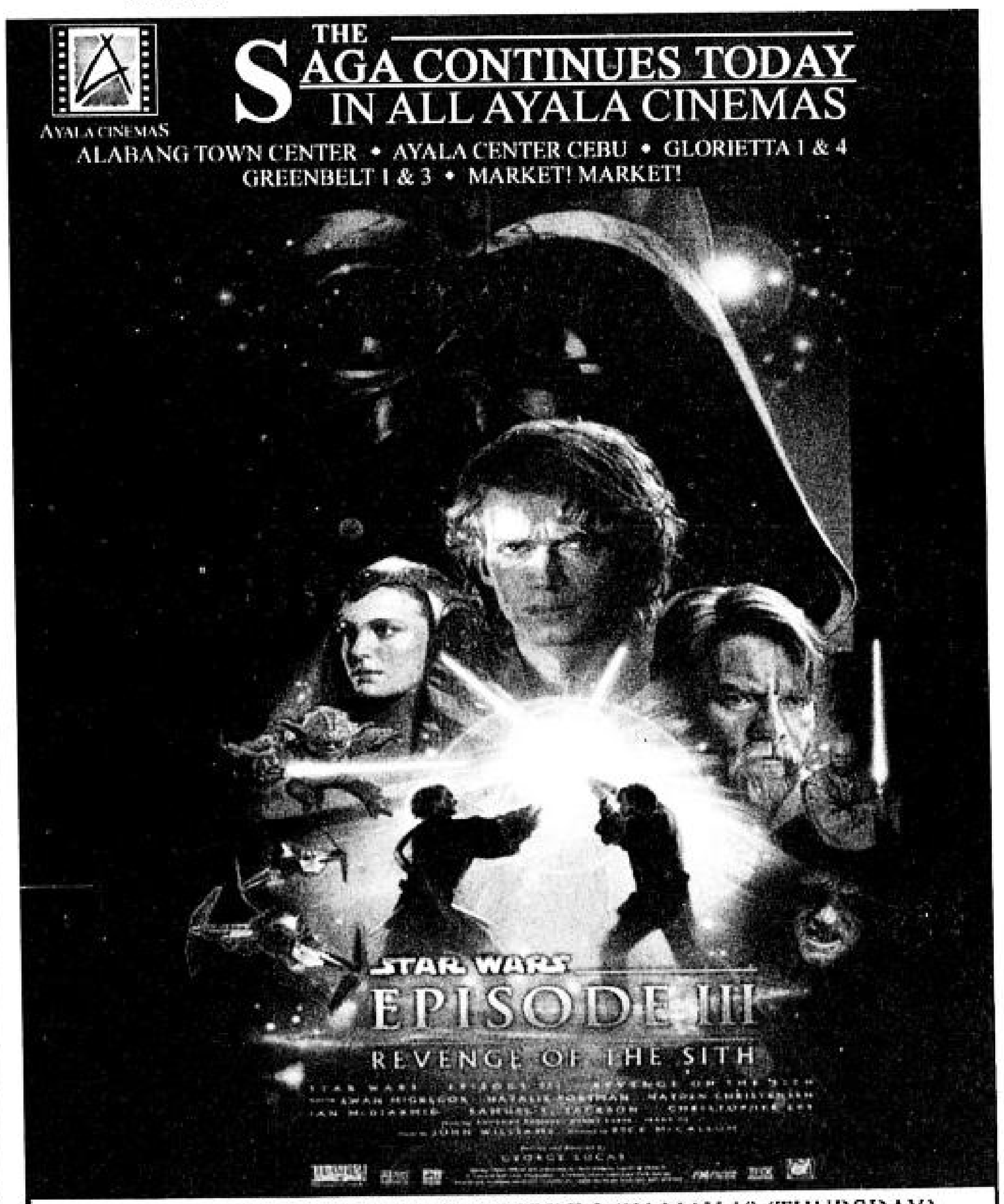
THE SAGA CONTINUES TODAY IN ALL AYALA CINEMAS
AYALA CINEMAS
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GREENBELT 1 & 3 • MARKET! MARKET!
STAR WARS
EPISODE III
REVENGE OF THE SITH

SCHEDULES OF STAR WARS EPISODE 3 ON MAY 19 (THURSDAY)

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Cinema 1 - 10:40 am, 1:30 pm, 4:20, 10:00
Cinema 2 - 11:10 am, 2:00 pm, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30
Cinema 3 - 11:40 am, 2:30 pm, 5:20, 8:10, 11:00
Cinema 4 - 1:00 pm, 3:50, 6:40, 9:30
Cinema 5 - 12:30 pm, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00

GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 1 - 12:30 pm, 3:30, 6:30, 9:30
Cinema 2 - 1:00 pm, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
Cinema 3 - 10:30 am, 1:30 pm, 4:30, 7:30,10:30

GLORIETTA 4
Cinema 1 - 12:40 pm, 3:30, 6:20, 9:10
Cinema 2 - 11:45 am, 2:35 pm, 5:25, 8:15, 11:05
Cinema 3 - 12:10 pm, 3:00, 11:30
Cinema 6 - 1:40 pm, 4:30, 10:10
Cinema 7 - 1:10 pm, 4:00, 6:50, 9:40

GREENBELT 1
Cinema 1 - 12:30 pm, 3:20, 6:10, 8:15
Cinema 2 - 1:15 pm, 4:05, 6:55, 9:00

GREENBELT 3
Cinema 1 - 1:40 pm, 4:30, 10:10
Cinema 2 - 2:10 pm, 5:00, 10:40
Cinema 3 - 1:10 pm, 4:00, 6:50, 9:40, 12:30
Cinema 4 - 12:40 pm, 3:30, 6:20, 9:10, 12:00
Cinema 5 - 12:15 pm, 3:05, 5:55, 11:35

MARKET! MARKET!
Cinema 5 - 12:20 pm, 3:10, 6:00, 8:50
Cinema 6 -12:50 pm, 3:40, 6:30, 9:20
Cinema 7 - 1:20 pm, 4:10, 7:00, 9:50

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Cinema 1 - 12:30 pm, 3:10
Cinema 2 - 1:30 pm, 3:50, 9:30

SCREENING SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

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THURSDAY,
MAY 19, 2005

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B1

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E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph
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Editor Raul O. Marcelo
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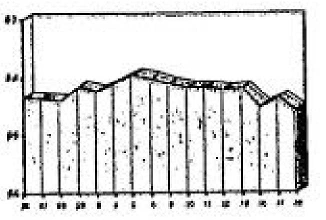
INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



₱ 54.590= $ 1

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¥ 107.49= $ 1

As of 5 p.m., May 18, 2005

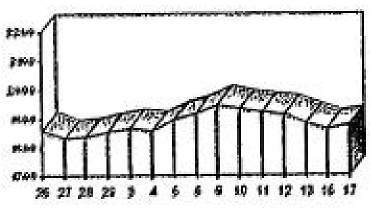
GOLD: $420.00-420.50

per ounce Hong Kong, May 17, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Stocks end flat

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B3)

SHARE prices yesterday closed flat, as continued investor caution offset a positive Wall Street performance and the government's improved fiscal position, dealers said.

While investor sentiment was boosted by expectations that the government may have posted a budget surplus in April, following record-high tax collections last month, there are doubts the market can sustain any upturn given the thin turnover.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 2.92 points to 1,879.39 after trading between 1,875.18 and 1,884.54. Volume was 362 million shares worth P927 million. The broader all-shares index gained 0.99 points to 1,150.18.

Losers outnumbered risers 33 to 21, with 42 stooks unchanged.

"Investors were still digesting some of the good news we had recently. They want to know whether this bounce would be sustained," said Ron Rodrigo of Accord Capital Equities.

Rodrigo said the market must be oversold following a recent five-day losing streak and could post further gains in the coming sessions, with investors likely to accumulate stocks that posted improved first quarter earnings.

Top-traded SM Investments ended unchanged at P248.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone was up P15 at P1,425.

Ayala Land gained 20 centavos to P7.60 while parent Ayala Corp. fell 20 centavos to P6.80.

San Miguel A shares, limited to local investors, advanced 50 centavos to P58.50 while San Miguel B shares, available to foreign buyers, fell P1 to P85.

AFP

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER implementing eight price increases since the start of the year, oil firms rolled back gasoline prices for the second time in two weeks yesterday by 75 centavos a liter, reflecting the softening prices of the product in the world market.

First to cut their prices at noon yesterday were industry leader Petron Corp., Caltex Philippines Inc. and PTT Philippines Corp.

Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Seaoil Petroleum Corp., Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc. and Flying V followed two hours later, slashing their gasoline prices by the same level.

Total (Philippines) Corp. was scheduled to implement its gasoline price rollback at 12:01 a.m. today. Eastern Petroleum Corp., for its part, said it was adjusting its prices to levels based on the prevailing prices in the places of operation of its service stations.

Oil firms last week cut their gasoline prices, mostly by P1 a liter. Petron slashed its pump price for gasoline by P1.25 a liter.

But while gasoline prices were reduced, the oil companies increased the prices of diesel and kerosene by 25 centavos a liter in that week. Petron hiked its prices for these products by 50 centavos per liter.

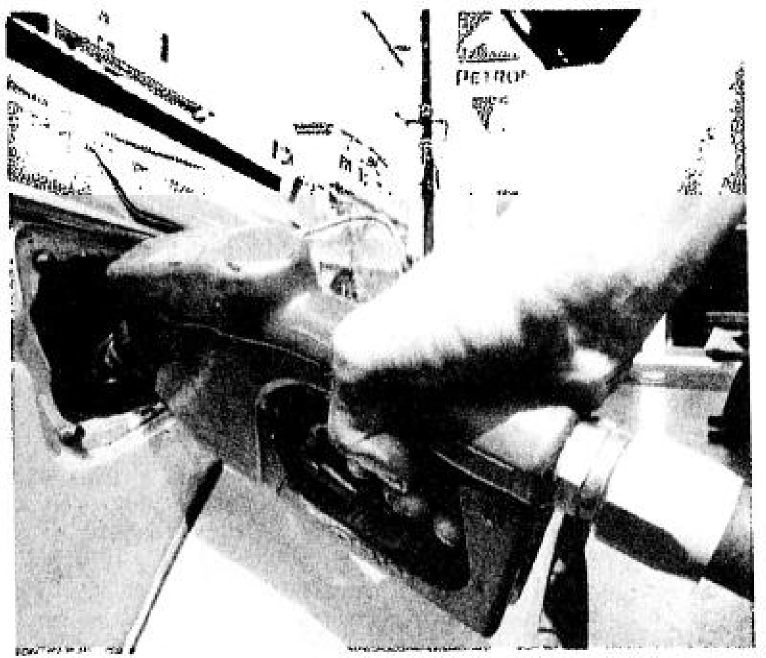
Since the start of the year, gasoline prices have gone up eight times or by a total of P4.35 a liter, while prices of diesel have increased nine times or by a total of P4.55 a liter.

Seaoil president Glenn Yu said the price rollback was brought about by the continued softening of gasoline prices in the world market.

"We can expect more price cuts if the current (world market) trend continues," Seaoil president Glenn Yu said.

Prices of other petroleum products, including diesel and kerosene, were not adjusted this week as their prices in the world market remained relatively high.

Data from the Department of Energy showed that the price of the benchmark Dubai crude has so far softened to an average of $45.26 a barrel this month, down by almost $2 from the $47.20 a barrel posted last month.



FURTHER decline in world market prices will result in more cuts in local pump prices.

PDI PHOTO

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products dropped by almost $7 to a May 1-17 average of $54.88 a barrel from the April average of $61.50 a barrel.

MOPS-based diesel remained on the high side, at an average of $63.13 a barrel in the first 17 days of May. This was, however, still lower than the $68.29-a-barrel average posted in April.

GDP growth seen slowing down to 5.3%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE INTERAGENCY Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) said economic growth this year would likely slow down to 5.3 percent from 6.1 percent in 2004 due latgely to the expected decline in farm production and lower demand for electronics exports.

The figure is at the low end of the government's 5.3-6.3 percent target range for the year.

The government will announce the first quarter gross domestic product growth on May 30.

The DBCC earlier set the official GDP growth target for this year at 5.3 to 6.3 percent. Despite indications of a slower growth this year, the DBCC said the target range would be kept as recommended by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

The Neda, a member-agency of the DBCC, said the target could still be met despite the challenges facing the economy this year. It, however, admitted that the GDP growth figure would likely hit the low end of the target range.

The other members of the DBCC are the Department of Budget and Management, the Department of Finance, and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

The Neda earlier said GDP growth would likely decelerate this year, after hitting a record high last year, because of the impact of the El Niño weather phenomenon on farm production and the weaker demand for electronics which could dampen export prospects.

In the first quarter, merchandise exports grew by only 3.6 percent year-on-year to $9.52 billion, much lower than the full-year target of 10 percent. Exports even posted a 2.8-percent decline in March to $3.256 billion, from $3.35 billion in the same month last year.

Neri, who is also the country's economic planning secretary, said the government should exert extra effort in addressing problems such as infrastructure botflenecks, labor productivity, and high cost of electricity if it wanted to attain the 10-percent export growth target for this year.

"Wage increases should be kept at reasonable levels and decided through the regional tripartite wage boards. The fiscal-deficit reduction program should remain on track. Infrastructure projects and the implementation of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) should be on schedule," he added.

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Praying it safe

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

WITH the media uproar against companies in pre-need education plans, the Securities and Exchange Commission has no choice but to take the side of the public.

But, of course, the SEC must play it safe!

A good example is the case of Pacific Plans, which was the first and so far the only pre-need education plan company that ever admitted to a serious liquidity problem.

The company is seeking court approval for its rehabilitation plan. The company said it needs 10 years to earn enough from its investments, plus the P250 million from Alfonso Yuchengco, to cover its obligation to some 34,000 customers—and only partially.

Those 34,000 customers are the holders of the legendary "open-ended" education plans, as against the "fixed value" plans.

The open-ended plans, as the term indicates, are the "come-what-may" plans.

For the "open-ended" plans, in effect, pre-need companies promise that they would take care of the tuition of the kids of whoever would be holding the plans, say, 10 or 20 years from now, even if by then, the tuition would be somewhere in the vicinity of another universe.

Of course, anyone who holds such an "open-ended" plan of Pacific Plans, must be against the rehab.

It removes the, well, "open-endedness" of their education plans. The plan holders naturally want the company to stick to its open-ended commitment.

And so the SEC told the court that, yes, indeed, Pacific Plans must pay for the plans right now, this very moment, and it must pay for the entire tuition of the plan holders' kids, wherever in the stratosphere the tuition may be.

* * *

YOU know what? The SEC cannot ever go public with its approval of any rehab plan of any pre-need company, because the SEC itself is the pre-need industry's one and only regulator.

For the SEC, going with the Pacific Plan rehab is a public admission that it failed the public in its job as regulator.

How come the company is having problems? How come the SEC did not warn the public about its financial trouble, in the first place? Where in the SEC offices were the SEC officials sleeping?

Thus, the SEC cannot side with the company it was supposed to regulate. In the Pacific Plan case, the SEC must tell the court that it does not agree with the rehab plan.

Under the law, according to the SEC, Pacific Plans has an "open-ended" obligation. Its obligation, therefore, must stay that way - meaning, "no end."

Everybody wants Pacific Plans, and the entire pre-need education sector, to keep their promise under the "open-ended" plans.

I also want them to pay up. Every parent wants them to pay up. I am sure that even the owners and executives of the pre-need companies themselves want their companies to pay up.

The only problem is, well, where the hell will they get the money? It is a LIQUIDITY problem, right? That means the pre-need companies do not have the money now, right? Anybody home?

I mean, sure, in taking the NO MERCY position, the SEC may be playing it safe with the public. But it is not exactly a realistic position.

To follow the SEC's wish, the pre-need companies will need lots and lots of prayer, plus a huge miracle, to raise the money for all the open-ended education plans.

What's that? Praying it safe?

Either a miracle, or this cute administration steps into the crisis and provides a liquidity mechanism for the pre-needs.

This, by the way, has been done before. It is not as if this cute administration is reinventing the wheel.

* * *

ANYWAY, "open-ended" plans have become a monster. Even the SEC admitted as much, when it banned that type of pre-need education plan in 2002.

For if the "open-ended" plan was such a good thing, why would the SEC prevent pre-need companies from marketing such a hot-selling item?

I think the SEC itself recognized, although belatedly, that the "open-ended" plans were killing the pre-need companies.

Thus, in 2002, the SEC figured out—correctly—that the "open-ended" plans were not realistic at all. That's why the SEC banned them at that time.

What, I wonder, makes the SEC think that the same unrealistic "open-ended" plans only three years ago, are suddenly so realistic to the SEC today?

It is even telling the court to require Pacific Plan to cover for all those plans?

Playing it safe. What else? The parents are angry, and understandably so, and the SEC cannot go out and explain to them a reality that they do not want to hear.

* * *

BELIEVE me. Today, employees of private schools have a little sideline from brokering "open-ended" plans in the secondary market.

Not everybody who bought "open-ended" plans years ago, are actually using them. The holders also sell the plans to others.

Because the tuition has gone up to another galaxy in the past 13 years, "open-ended" plans are selling today at a handsome profit.

On the average, based on the prevailing tuition, an "open-ended" plan enjoys an ROI of about 1,600 percent.

If the user goes to some exclusive schools, with their tuition having gone up to somewhere near the door of heaven, the ROI can even reach 2,200 percent.

Thus, in an actual real-life case of Pacific Plan, a plan holder bought an "open-ended" plan for only P13,800 some 15 years ago.

By the time Pacific Plan was done paying "open-endedly" for the plan, it has spent a total of P310,000.

Nobody, no matter how good they are in financial investments, can earn that much. Not in this country! Not if you are doing legitimate business! Jueteng and drugs, sure! But not legitimate business!

Believe me, even employees of private schools cannot make that much money as brokers in the thriving secondary market for "open-ended" plans.

* * *

WHAT is this I hear that AMA, a reputable chain of computer schools, is facing a multi-million-peso damage suit from the owner of the building of one of its…well, "branches?"

From what I heard, the computer school AMA tried to ride on the "nursing course" bandwagon, by opening its own nursing schools. It even rented a building in Makati for its nursing program.

Unfortunately, the Commission on Higher Education, or CHED, ordered the closure of the AMA nursing school.

According to CHED, the AMA nursing school failed to comply with Ched requirements. It had to be closed down.

With the CHED closure order, AMA abandoned the building for its nursing school. The building owner is claiming that AMA had a long-term lease contract until 2014.

What's more, word goes around that AMA left the building in a sad state—with rooms defaced and facilities broken.

The AMA school officials supposedly also left the keys with the barangay officials—not with the building owner. Tsk tsk tsk!

* * *

STILL on schools, with the opening of classes barely a month from today, the Department of Education should be busy sprucing up the facilities of public schools.

Well, the DepEd is busy. But unfortunately, it does not have the money for repairs and paint jobs.

So what does the DepEd do? Just cry about not getting enough funding?

DepEd undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz had a bright idea. He organized a bayanihan activity among parents and teachers to spruce up the schools in their localities.

It is called the "brigada eskuwela."

Under the program, anybody can volunteer to help in minor repairs and beautification of any public school, in any barangay, in the country.

Luz says that three years ago, when the program started, the DepEd computed the man hours and materials that were donated by the community to the public schools at only P400 million worth.

The following year, in 2004, the equivalent amount went up to P700 million.

The department is targeting an amount of P1 billion this year. Wow! If the trend continues in another 20 years, I supposed the DepEd can raise enough contributions to build more classrooms—bayanihan style—and air-conditioned, at that.

It is not too late to volunteer. You have until June.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, May 18, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
Banks & Financial Services					
Banks					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	28	28.5	28	28	975,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	48.5	49	48	48.5	1,691,700
China Banking Corp.	735	735	735	735	40
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.64	.64	2,020,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	46.5	47	46.5	47	2,400
International Exch. Bank	18.75	18.75	18.5	18.5	29,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	32	32	31.5	32	643,700
Philippine National Bank	32.5	32.5	32.5	32.5	107,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	200
Security Bank Corp.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	61,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	10,000
First Metro Invest. Corp	290	290	290	290	150
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	100,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1650	1680	1650	1680	700
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.75	13	12.75	13	1,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.06	956,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	830	830	825	830	151,130
Ipeople Inc.	3.6	3.7	3.55	3.7	31,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.2	0.2	0.2	.2	10,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.25	950,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	25,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1420	1435	1415	1425	107,090
Philweb Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.017	.017	46,200,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	16	16.25	16	16.25	14,900
Manila Electric Co. B	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	274,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	5.7	5.9	5.7	5.7	8,900,000
Petron Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.3	3.3	886,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.78	1.8	2,150,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	1,523,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.6	0.64	0.6	.64	170,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.05	3.2	3.05	3.1	1,956,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.35	3.35	9,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	27.5	28	27.5	27.5	558,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	58.5	57.5	58.5	173,700
San Miguel Corp. B	85	86	85	85	82,900
Universal Robina Corp.	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.5	318,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	.27	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	2,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0085	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	20,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.9	7	6.8	6.8	3,237,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.44	0.45	0.44	0.45	300,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.7	4.75	4.65	4.75	1,724,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.031	0.031	0.031	.031	3,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	2,020,000
APC Group Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	.29	500,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	25,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1	1	0.99	.99	2,910,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	.155	20,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.2	0.21	0.2	.2	4,360,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.33	0.32	.33	550,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.46	2.48	2.4	2.42	905,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.037	0.037	0.037	.037	800,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp	8	8	8	8	6,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	44	45	43	43	1,122,600
Global Equities Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.0825	.0825	2,600,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.014	0.014	0.014	.014	900,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.34	1.34	356,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.35	.36	19,500,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	.21	10,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp	0.25	0.25	0.23	.23	40,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.9	.9	80,000
SM Investments Corp.	247	248	246	248	702,240
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.17	.17	2,010,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	20,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.18	1.38	1.18	1.38	22,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.1	.1	670,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.12	1.14	1,500,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.3	1.32	1.26	1.28	1,330,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	621,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	12.5	12.75	12.5	12.75	722,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,700
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.4	7.7	7.4	7.6	6,991,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	100,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	.26	1,850,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	260,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	6,650,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.5	1.52	1.5	1.5	5,936,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.51	.51	410,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	.13	250,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.2	0.2	0.2	.2	220,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.4	3,201,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.79	0.79	0.79	.79	60,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	2,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	55,000
Benguet Corp. A	7.8	8	7.8	8	9,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.3	1,490,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.33	0.33	0.31	.31	9,080,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	110,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	41,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.006	0.0065	17,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.85	0.88	0.85	.88	220,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1	1	1	1	20,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	29.5	29.5	28	28	138,700
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	5,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	3,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	105,000

LBP income up 22% as of March

By Doris C. Dumlao

LAND Bank of the Philippines, the country's fourth biggest lender, reported a 22 percent increase in net profit in the first quarter to P765 million on improved revenues from loans and investments and reduced expenses.

In a press briefing Tuesday night, bank officials said the state-owned lender had improved its net interest margins in the first three months of the year and had also reaped higher foreign exchange gains.

LBP president Gary Teves said the first quarter performance exceeded the first quarter net income target of P625 million.

"At the rate we're going, we're confident we can hit our net income target of P2.5 billion for 2005," Teves said.

"Improving our financial strength allows us to sustain our ongoing efforts to promote countryside development and generate employment," he said.

The bank's return on equity during the first quarter stood at 14.2 percent, up from 11.3 percent a year ago, and higher than the industry average of 8.6 percent.

An increase in net interest margin to 5.1 percent from 4.3 percent a year ago boosted loan revenues, even as net loan portfolio declined by 7.6 percent to P121.5 billion.

The slowdown in the net loan portfolio was attributed to the successful sale last year of P13.5 billion worth of non-performing loans under the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) framework.

The bad assets were sold to Deutsche Bank-Cargill Financial Services International Inc. and JP Morgan.

In turn, the SPV deal allowed the bank to slash its non-performing loan ratio to 7.2 percent as of March, from 13.9 percent a year ago, which was better than the industry average of 12.5 percent.

Actual NPLs declined to P10 billion as of March from P20.2 billion a year ago, while its real and other properties owned and acquired likewise dropped to P16.4 billion from P17.4 billion.

"We are hoping to dispose of our remaining non-performing assets this year to improve our current NPA ratio of 9.8 percent," Teves said.

Landbank's foreign exchange gains, which jumped by 109 percent to P422 million in the first quarter from a year ago, also contributed to the bank's profitability.

On the expenditure side, Teves said Landbank had developed a cost-cutting program to respond to the government's call for austerity.

"Since its implementation in September last year, our program has generated a total additional savings of P401 million," Teves said.

In the first quarter alone, the belt-tightening measures saved the company some P136 million.

Measures taken included limiting overtime, travel, advertising and company celebration expenses as well as cutting down on fuel and utility costs.

Citystate opens online inquiry

CITYSTATE Savings Bank will soon open its online loan inquiry facility.

With the online inquiry facility, bank customers will have instant access to their existing loan accounts. It will enable clients to monitor the status of the account at any given time.

"This significant development in online banking offers bank clients a reliable, accurate and convenient way to access their existing loan accounts 24 hours a day, anytime, anywhere," said Jeffrey T. Tantiado, the bank's vice president. "This facility allows the borrowers real time information of their existing loan accounts such as outstanding loan balance, monthly amortization, payment due date and maturity date all for free."

Tantiado assures bank clients that the online loan payment facility will be integrated into the system through the gateway facility of BancNet.

The publicly listed Citystate Savings Bank was acclaimed top savings bank in by the National Consumers Affairs Foundation, and outstanding savings bank by the Consumers Union of the Philippines.

For details log on to http://www.citystate-savings.com.

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DISCLOSURES

JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. disclosed that 28,689 shares were bought and fully paid for last May 9-13 under the company's stock option plan, bringing the number of treasury shares to a total of 29.101 million shares.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **San Miguel Corp.** were Eduardo M. Cojuanco, Jr., Ramos S. Ang, Estelito P. Mendoza, Iñigo Zobel, Winston F. Garcia, Corazon S. de la Paz, Menardo Jimenez, Leo Alvez, Pacifico Fajardo, Egmidio De Silva Jose, Octavio R. Espiritu, Henry Sy, Jr., Yoshinori Isozaki, Hitoshi Oshima and Kazuhiro Sato. The company's elected by-law officers were Eduardo M. Cojuanco, Jr., Ramon S. Ang, Ferdinand Constantino, Francis Jardeleza, Lorenzo Timbol and Rosabel Socorro Balan.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL Exchange Bank will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 21, 4 p.m. at the Manila Polo Club, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of May 16 are entitled to notice and vote at the meeting.

* * *

EQUITABLE PCI Bank, Inc. disclosed that minor revisions were effected on certain portions of the bank's SEC 17-Q as of March 31.

* * *

PHILWEB Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 31, 3 p.m. at 17/F Tower I, Enterprise Center, 6766 Ayala Ave., Makati City. Stockholders of record as of April 26 are entitled to notice and vote at the meeting. *Compiled by: Erika Sarmiento, PDI Research*

CURRENCIES

May 18, 2005

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent*
United States	Dollar	0.793398921	1.000000	54.3940
Japan	Yen	0.007383	0.009305	0.5061
United Kingdom	Pound	1.454776	1.833600	99.7368
Hongkong	Dollar	0.101727	0.128217	6.9742
Switzerland	Franc	0.647408	0.815993	44.3851
Canada	Dollar	0.626995	0.790264	42.9856
Singapore	Dollar	0.479164	0.603938	32.8506
Australia	Dollar	0.599153	0.755173	41.0769
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.104618	2.652661	144.2888
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.211573	0.266667	14.5051
Brunei	Dollar	0.477721	0.602119	32.7517
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000106	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.019925	0.025113	1.3660
UAE	Dirham	0.216026	0.272279	14.8103
Euro	Euro	1	1.260400	68.5582
Argentina	Peso	0.275008	0.346620	18.8540
Brazil	REAL	0.320306	0.403714	21.9596
Denmark	Kroner	0.134342	0.169325	9.2103
India	Rupee	0.018277	0.023036	1.2530
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.208817	0.263193	14.3161
Mexico	New Peso	0.072179	0.090975	4.9485
New Zealand	Dollar	0.562774	0.709320	38.5828
Norway	Kroner	0.123527	0.155693	8.4688
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013341	0.016815	0.9146
South Africa	Rand	0.123775	0.156006	8.4858
Korea	Won	0.00079	0.000996	0.0542
Sweden	Kroner	0.108685	0.136986	7.4512
Syria	Pound	0.015284	0.019264	1.0478
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025275	0.031857	1.7328
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.00037	0.000466	0.0253

Earnings of SMC units take a beating in Q1

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SUBSIDIARIES of Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage firm San Miguel Corp. took a beating in net profits in the first quarter due to higher taxes, increased costs of raw materials and decline in consumption.

But SMC's domestic beer operations, international beer sales and packaging revenues in the first quarter cushioned the blow.

In a financial report to the Securities and Exchange Commission, SMC's liquor arm Ginebra San Miguel Inc. (GSMI) reported its net earnings fell 12.3 percent to P367.9 million from P419.66 million the previous year.

While net sales grew 2.9 percent to P3.03 billion, cost of sales was also higher by 4.1 percent to P1.9 billion.

This pared down income from operations by 7.5 percent to P566.95 million in the first quarter from P612.96 million in the same period last year.

GSMI said that it was confronted at the start of the year with a 30-percent increase in excise tax.

GSMI's gross profit remained flat at P1.11 billion as the increase in the costs of alcohol and packaging materials eroded revenue.

SMC's softdrinks arm, Cosmos Bottling Corp. (CBC) reported net earnings sunk 78 percent to P49 million during the January to March period from P218 million last year.

Cosmos is 98 percent owned by Philippine Bottlers Inc. which, in turn, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. of the SMC Group.

Due to lower sales volume, net sales dropped 20 percent to P2 billion year-on-year from P2.6 billion. CBC managed to trim cost of sales to P1.54 billion from P1.72 billion in 2004.

While operating expenses were lower by 19 percent to P469 million, operating income was anemic at P93 million as against P325 million posted in the same period last year.

In the food category, San Miguel Pure Foods Co. Inc. said it incurred a net loss of P40 million in the first quarter, compared to the net income of P104.2 million in the same period last year.

SMPFC includes Purefoods-Hormel, Magnolia, Real Snacks Manufacturing, San Miguel foods, PT San Miguel Pure Foods Indonesia and San Miguel Super Coffeemix Co.

SMPFC said consolidated revenues hit P11.6 billion or 25 percent higher, in spite of the frail market and tight competition.

Its poultry business revenue as of March reached P3.7 billion, up 27 percent. The industry supply glut and weak demand dragged down prices of chicken and hindered the company from reporting positive operating results.

For its property arm, San Miguel Properties Inc., net income declined 10 percent to P56.5 million from January to March from P63 million the previous year due to higher operating expenses and the reduction in the contribution of lease operations, a major source of income.

International beer sales revenues meanwhile grew 7 percent to $62.6 million due to strong sales in Indonesia and Australia.

SMC had said its net earnings grew two percent in the first quarter to P1.78 billion due to higher costs.

Globe to offer lower call, text rates

By Clarissa S. Batino

GLOBE Telecom Inc. may soon launch a new call and text promo, offering rates as cheap as P2.50 per minute of call and 50-centavos per text to its more than 12 million prepaid subscribers.

Globe has received the approval of the National Telecommunications Commission to offer a new 30-day tariff to its mobile subscribers while extending by another month its existing promo for its fixed-line customers.

"We asked for the NTC approval, but we are still deciding whether we would actually go ahead with it," said Froilan Castelo, Globe assistant vice president.

The telco giant earlier said that it would shun the unlimited pricing, but would instead offer rates that would give its customer better value.

"The way to go for us is not the unlimited call and text tariff," said Globe president Gerardo Ablaza. "Our experience indicates that behavior leads to a massive change in call volume that is unsustainable if we were to meet the minimum requirement on network fitness."

Globe and its Touch Mobile unit first came out with its cut-rate offer from mid-March to April. But Globe ended the offer prematurely because of the network traffic arising from the deal.

BCDA can't take over John Hay, says CJHDevCo

BAGUIO CITY—THE CJH Development Corp. (CJHDevCo) has shrugged off the threat of the Bases Conversion Development Authority to take over Camp John Hay, describing the move as "premature and illegal at this point."

In a statement, CJHDevCo spokesperson lawyer Gina Alvarez said that, "unless the BCDA is ready to pay us P10.9 billion, it cannot mount a legal takeover."

CJHDevCo has infused billions of pesos to turn Camp John Hay into a premier tourist destination, attracting over three million visitors and creating over six thousand jobs since 1996.

On May 17, the Bases Conversion Development Authority on May 17 announced that it was seriously considering taking over Camp John Hay from CJHDevCo after the latter allegedly failed to settle P2.2 billion in unpaid rent.

Alvarez said that instead of threatening to mount "an illegal takeover, BCDA should concentrate on addressing the legal and financial impact of the Supreme Court decision nullifying the John Hay [special economic zone] incentives.

"All BCDA has done so far was to sidestep the tax issue," Alvarez added.

Last week, CHJDevCo filed an arbitration suit against BCDA for the latter's continued refusal to abide by the terms of the lease agreement, which provides for the convening of a joint committee as a dispute settlement mechanism, and to force BCDA to honor the tax and duty exemptions under the John Hay SEZ.

"The lease agreement expressly provides that if the joint committee fails, the dispute should be referred to arbitration," Alvarez said.

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BMW 316i Ed.
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BMW 318i Ed.
2004 Titanium Silver
5,100km, P2,075,000

BMW 318i Exec.
2004 Titanium Silver
13,000km, P2,300,000

BMW 318i Exec.
2004 Oxford Green
2,000km, P2,350,000

BMW 318i M Sport
2003 Titanium Silver
9,300km, P1,850,000

BMW 318i M Sport
2004 Titanium Silver
7,000km, P2,802,500

BMW 318i M Sport
2004 Black Sapphire
5,000km, P2,802,500

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BMW 325i Exec.
2004 Titanium Silver
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BMW 325i M Sport
2004 Steel Gray
6,000km, P3,350,000

BMW 525i Exec.
2004 Amethyst Gray
6,000km, P4,550,000

BMW 525i Exec.
2004 Silver Gray
3,000km, P4,550,000

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2004 Toledo Blue
2,900km, P3,450,000

BMW X3 2.5i Exec.
2004 Black Sapphire
3,500km, P3,750,000

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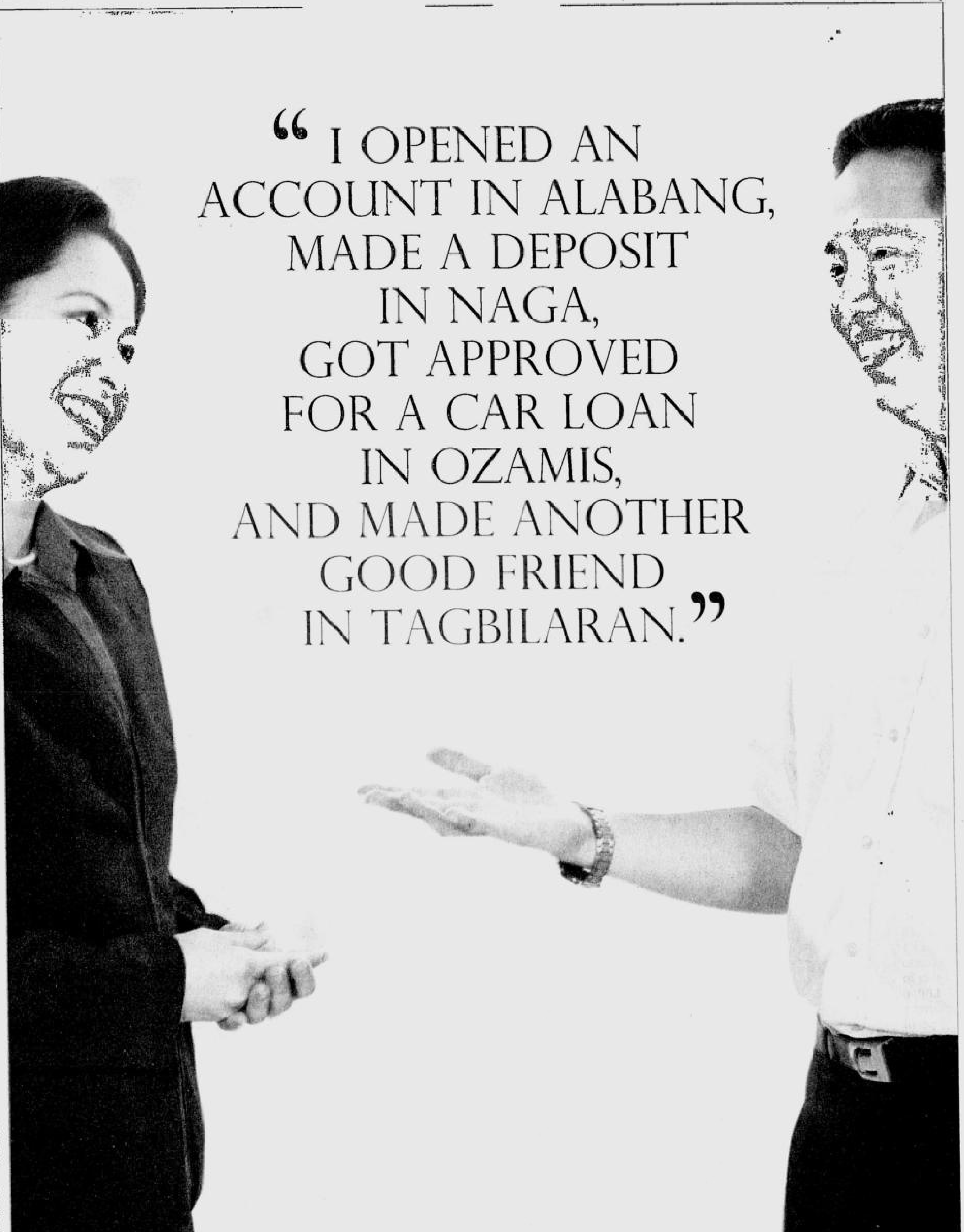
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GlobeSolutions' TxtConnect links up Unilever employees

GLOBESOLUTIONS, in keeping with its reputation of providing convenient and effective communication solutions to address business needs, has forged a partnership with Unilever Philippines to link up its employees through the TxtConnect service.

TxtConnect allows a company to send high-volume text broadcasts to a pre-registered recipient base, which may be composed of employees, dealers, customers, or other business contacts. It thus provides a fast and cost-efficient way of relaying official information through SMS. Unilever decided to utilize TxtConnect to facilitate the transmission of important announcements or updates to its employees, especially those who are working in the field.

"We chose to apply the TxtConnect service to our business because it has the functionality we're looking for," explains Unilever's country head of information technology Maita Cabinian. "Most Unilever employees have mobile phones, so this gives the company a fail-proof way of sending urgent messages and of keeping our personnel well-informed and updated."

To ensure security, employees' mobile phone numbers must first be registered in the recipient base before they can receive text broadcasts. Each text broadcast starts with an ID number identifying the company, which validates that the message comes from an official source. Employees can also respond to text messages sent by the administration, allowing for multiple access and easy connectivity. This can also serve as a convenient means of eliciting employee feedback and verifying important information. Backed by Globe's reliable and extensive mobile network, TxtConnect is expected to enable effective communication and help build teamwork within Unilever's workforce.

Cabinian says that employees' reception of the project has so far been positive and enthusiastic. "Our employees are excited about this development since they know it will make the work flow smoother and more efficient. They actually look forward to using TxtConnect," she affirms.

Unilever is a leading international manufacturer of home, personal care, and food products. In the Philippines, it handles the manufacture and sales of top brands such as Close Up, Rexona, Vaseline, Pond's, Surf, Knorr, Lady's Choice, Lipton, and Selecta. Over its 75-year history, it has expanded its operations globally to become one of the biggest companies, employing nearly 250,000 people worldwide.

Dan David, Globe Telecom's head of corporate wireless business, welcomed the new partnership. "Our partnership with Unilever proves that companies are finding more and more ways to use the TxtConnect service," he says. "Globe is happy to provide Unilever Phils with an efficient, effective business communications solution. We are confident that this will boost the overall productivity and performance of their employees."

Put your business on the fast track to success with GlobeSolutions. Call the GlobeSolutions hotline (730-1999) to inquire about TxtConnect and other business communication services, or e-mail globesolutions@globetel.com.ph

Globe Solutions

GLOBESOLUTIONS and Unilever Phils ink their partnership for the application of the TxtConnect service in Unilever's employee communications. From left: Maita Cabinian, Unilever's country head of IT, Unilever national finance and IT director Efren Samonte, Globe corporate wireless business head Dan David, and head of GlobeSolutions sales Maridol Ylanan.

PANA FOUNDATION LENDS A HAND TO RED CROSS

The Philippine Association of National Advertisers Foundation (Panaf) helps the Philippine Red Cross in relieving calamity victims all over the country through donating used outdoor advertising materials. Coming from Panaf member companies, the used tarpaulins will serve as make-shift tents. Photo shows (from left) PANA project manager Cookie Manzanero, Panaf chair Bobby Sumulong, Red Cross Secretary General Victor Lloso Jr and Red Cross Warehouse Assistant In Charge Ronald Caluag.

BPI honored with SuperBrand Award for 2nd straight year

FOR ITS commendable performance in the banking sector for two years in a row, the Bank of the Philippine Islands has been honored anew with the highly-esteemed SuperBrand Award.

The Reader's Digest SuperBrand Awards is based on a comprehensive consumer preference survey that represents the lifestyle of Asian consumers. Conducted annually among consumers in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand, the survey is considered as one of the most accurate and thorough market scans that rates brands based on quality, value, trustworthiness, strong image and understanding of customer needs. This year, a total of 42 categories of products and services were presented and given out to 94 awardees.

BPI consumer banking senior vice president for marketing, Nita A. Claravall says, "we are truly grateful to the consumers who think highly of our services enough for us to merit SuperBrand status for the second consecutive year. It has been our commitment to bring them relevant products and services that would make life easier for them and with this award they can rest assured of our continuous efforts to remain true to that same commitment."

The Bank of the Philippine Islands has been one of the most trusted financial institutions in the country today. With over 700 branches nationwide, over 1,000 Express Teller ATM Machines nationwide and a number of branches in different parts of the world, BPI continues to serve the Filipinos banking needs wherever they may be.

From introducing the first 24-hour ATM, the Express Teller ATM Card in 1983, it carries on the innovative stance by ushering services in the computer age. To date, BPI has introduced services like BPI Direct, the phone and Internet banking facility for Expat Pinoys or Filipinos working overseas but prefer to do the banking transactions and see through the needs of their family members themselves.

BPI consumer banking senior vice president for marketing Nita A. Claravall receives the award from chair of the Adboard of the Phils Raul S. Alvarez, and OIC for International Trade Group of DTI Serafin Juliano.

In line with this service for Expat Pinoys, BPI has also launched the Expat Pinoy Program which created an array of services that provide a venue for them to send remittance directly to their loved one's account, Express Remittance, or make their dreams come true with services that assist them to have their own home, car or send their children to the best schools.

BPI's latest offering that makes banking more convenient for its patrons is the Express Connect mobile banking service. This service allows BPI account holders to enjoy the convenience of doing balance inquiry on accounts, credit card, auto and housing loan balances through Short Message Service (SMS).

"For a bank that has been established in 1853 and constantly reinvents itself, maintaining it's leadership stance in the market means more than just surviving and enduring the challenges brought about by time, rather it is to be of reliable service to our patrons, and that is what is more rewarding for us at BPI," Claravall ends.

A SERENE NIGHT OF PIANO MUSIC

Recently, St. Joseph's College celebrates Lourdes C.H. del Rosario's 40th year of teaching with a serene and captivating piano recital at the Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. The two hour recital staged some of St. Joseph's finest student pianist under the supervision of Lourdes C.H del Rosario. Del Rosario has been a strong foundation in the music department of St. Joseph College with her passion and love in music and with her unending devotion to discover more hands to play piano. One of the student pianist who participated in this captivating moment was Mark Jonathan Luna Balahadia who rendered a very interesting interpretation of Aragonaise assisted by Peeya del Rosario.

ProductFILES

Ready to roast

IF YOU'RE planning to host a cookout, check that the lean meat, poultry and seafood are fresh so you get great-tasting results. When storing raw food in the freezer, place them in separate Glad Zipper Freezer Bags to keep them fresh and free from contamination. If you're preparing to grill, thaw food in the refrigerator and not at room temperature. Boost the flavor of your roast by marinating raw food using flavorings like lemon juice, vinegar, wine, soy sauce, garlic, mustard, fruits or herbs for several hours or overnight in a tight-sealing Glad Zipper Storage Bag or Glad Zipper Freezer Bag. What's great about marinating using Glad Zipper Bags is that you're sure all parts are soaked in seasoning unlike in rigid containers where you have to constantly turn food over so all parts absorb the marinade. For basting later, use fresh marinade. Grill experts recommend tongs instead of fork to turn chicken, fish, beef or pork over. The reason is that once the surface is pierced, natural liquids drip out of the food - you want to keep the delicious flavors in and the roast tender. Grilling is easy and fun when you do it with Glad kitchen wraps and bags. Glad products are available in leading supermarkets nationwide.

GLAD
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CDO sets eyes on foreign markets

CDO-Foodsphere Inc, one of the country's largest meat processors, is going global in 2005, as it plans to ship out at least 50,000 cases of canned meat products to different countries this year.

Bernardino Martinez, the company's export sales manager, said CDO products had actually reached the foreign market as early as last year with the establishment of the company's export unit, which is in response to the government's challenge for local companies to explore global opportunities.

"This is in pursuit of the company's vision to be a major player in the processed meat sector. After creating a niche in the global trade last year, CDO products are now available in many countries," he said.

In 2004, CDO-Foodsphere tested the foreign market with a shipment of 2,000 cases of canned meat products worth around US$50,000. Martinez said its learning experience put the company in a better position to increase its presence in the global market this year.

The company seeks to export US$1 million worth of canned meat products to different countries with large concentrations of Filipino migrants and workers in 2005.

Data from the National Statistics Office (NSO) show that the country's food products made huge inroads in the foreign market in the first month of 2005, as the government set a 10-percent export growth target for the year.

The NSO reported that outbound shipments of processed food and beverages increased by as much as 36 percent year-on-year in January.

"We intend to serve our eight million fellow Filipinos abroad with high quality, yet affordable meat products that have distinct Filipino taste, which the CDO brand is known for," Martinez said.

Martinez said that CDO-Foodsphere's entry in the export sector represents the improved capacity of local companies to engage in the global competition and augurs well for the government's target of increasing national exports to US$47.4 billion in 2005 from US$39.6 billion in 2004.

He said that overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) can now buy CDO corned beef, karne norte, Manila beef loaf and other beef-based products in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

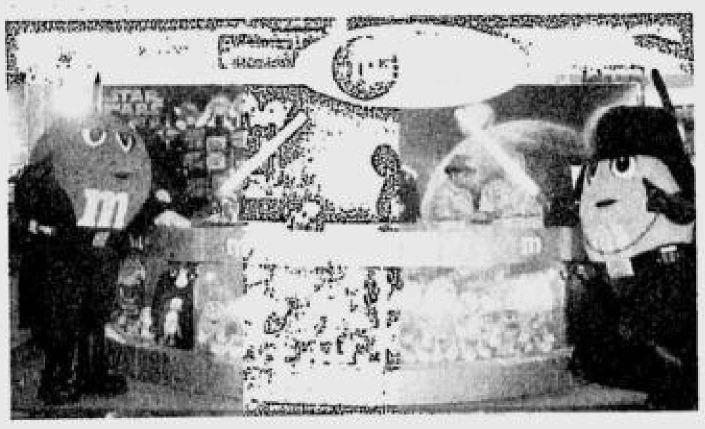
Martinez disclosed that the company is negotiating for the entry of CDO fresh frozen products such as Bibbo Hotdog into the United Arab Emirates, particularly its capital Dubai which hosts thousands of OFWs.

"CDO's viand lines such as lechon paksiw, dinuguan, asado, sweet and sour and picadillo have also found their way to Australia, bringing with them the true Filipino cuisine taste being longed for by Filipinos who migrated down under," he said.

He said other Asian countries such as Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan have already made trial orders for CDO products.

If trade negotiations become successful, CDO-Foodsphere is set to be the first Philippine-based canned meat exporter to Papua New Guinea. But the bigger goal is penetrating the lucrative markets of the United States and Canada, where more than three million Filipinos live.

"Hopefully, all arrangements will perfectly fall in place so that CDO products will be sold at various distribution markets in North America by the end of the year," Martinez said.



Star Wars M-pire invades Ayala Malls

AS THE world premiere of Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith rapidly approaches, Masterfoods Philippines tied up with Lucas Films and has come up with their own activity dubbed as the Star Wars M-pire. Just recently, Yellow M&M's as Darth Vader and Red M&M's as Anakin, started invading the Ayala Malls with their first invasion at the Glorietta Activity Center (Edsa mall side) which will go on until May 21 giving mallers a chance to meet and greet the M&M's Star Wars Mascots and for a minimum minimum P50 purchase of M&M's chocolates, they can either have a free photo with the M-pire mascots or choose from more than 12 downloadable images/logos of the M&M's Star Wars M-pire. Aside from these, the limited M&M's Star Wars M-pire t-shirts will be on sale together with other M&M's merchandise.

Strenghtening M&M's presence with this event, Masterfoods Philippines also came up with the M&M's Mperor text promo which will run until June 23. To join, simply purchase M&M's chocolates with specially marked stickers and text the code to 2910 (open to Smart and Globe subscribers) and you may have the chance to win any of the following: M&M's dispenser, glow-in-the-dark t-shirts and DVD movie sets. This is an event you wouldn't want to miss because it is packaged with great memories to cherish.

Watch out too for their next invasions from May 14 to 22, at the Market! Market! and see for yourself what they also have to offer at the Alabang Town Center Cinema Area from May 19 to 27.

RP biz mission seen to help boost Japanese arrivals

THE SCHEDULED Philippine business mission to Japan next month is expected to help increase Japanese arrivals to the Philippines up to 1 million by 2008, or around 20 percent of the country's total target of 5 million for 2010.

The 1 million-target arrival from Japan in 2008 is also projected to increase the Philippines' share of the Asean's Japanese market to 25 percent in just four years from 2005.

This was revealed by Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace H. Durano, who initiated the mission for that purpose.

Durano said the mission, slated in the cities of Osaka, Nagoya and Tokyo from June 1 to 10, would take advantage of the projected increase in Japan's outbound travel from 16.83 million in 2004 to 17.4 million this year.

Participating in the mission are various government agencies and their prospective constituents in the business sector. These are the Departments of Tourism, Trade and Industry, Philippine Convention and Visitors Corp (PCVC), Philippine Tourism Authority, Philippine Retirement Authority, Board of Investments, Foreign Trade Services Corp, and the Japan External Trade Organization.

The mission involves business conferences and individual appointments between Filipino enterprises and their Japanese counterparts, including a "Tourism Business Exchange" in each of the three cities.

TOURISM Secretary Joseph Ace H. Durano

"Some 200 Japanese businessmen, media and government officials will participate in the plenary sessions outlining Philippine business conditions and investments potential as well as trade and tourism opportunities," Durano said.

Durano is inviting Filipino businessmen, executives and entrepreneurs to join the mission by contacting the PCVC, the marketing arm of the DOT.

PCVC can be reached at 525-1153, 525-9318 local 229/230/231, e-mail pcvcnet@dotpcvc.gov.ph, or log on to www.dotpcvc.gov.ph.

"The mission will strengthen the Philippines' brand essence and presence in Japan, together with the country's participation in the World Expo 2005 being staged in Aichi, Nagoya up to September this year," Durano said.

At the same time, the Philippines is being positioned in the Japanese market as a country of "premium resort islands," using the words "premium resort" as the key elements for effective brand recall.

This brand strategy is effectively encapsulated in the creative handle "Premium Resort Islands Philippines", which is now being promoted and advertised in Japan.

The Japan-wide campaign is vigorously promoting "Premium Resort Islands Philippines" through attractive visuals under a creative concept dubbed "Koko Doko," the Japanese translation of "Where is this?"

"The answer to that question, of course, is-'These premium resorts and products are in the Philippines and you're never too far from it," Durano said.

"Koko Doko is thus establishing a top-of-mind recall of the Philippines in the Japanese consciousness by visually redefining the country as a premium resort island with amazing products and services that suit the Japanese lifestyle," Durano explained.

DOT statistics show that Japan is the country's second-largest export and tourist market, accounting for 382,807 or 18.4 percent of total foreign arrivals of 2.3 million in 2004.

With the DOT's marketing efforts combined, the tourist volume from Japan is projected to increase by 27 percent to 481,250 in 2005, by 30 percent to 625,625 in 2006, by 35 percent to 844,594 in 2007, and over a million in 2008 when total arrivals shall have reached the 4-million target, just a notch away from the 5-million goal for 2010.

Veronica Lapia-Merk
Adelbert A. Legasto

EMEAP APPOINTS BPI AS FUND MANAGER

The Emeap (Executives' Meeting of East Asia and Pacific Central Banks) recently appointed BPI as Fund Manager of the ABF Philippines Bond Index Fund, the Philippine Sub-Fund for the Asian Bond Fund 2 (ABF2). Emeap comprises of 11 central banks and monetary authorities in the East Asia and Pacific Region, namely: Reserve Bank of Australia, People's Bank of China, Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Bank Indonesia, Bank of Japan, Bank of Korea, Bank Negara Malaysia, Reserve Bank of New Zealand, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, The Monetary Authority of Singapore, and Bank of Thailand. The Emeap said that the ABF2 represents a historic milestone in the central banking cooperation in the region. The Emeap Group is confident that this will bring about significant benefits to the development of bond markets in Asia. ABF2 comprises of two (2) components, namely: a Pan-Asian Bond Index Fund (PAIF) and a set of Single-market funds. The PAIF is a single bond fund investing in sovereign and quasi-sovereign domestic currency-denominated bonds issued in eight (8) Emeap markets: China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore ad Thailand. The set of Single-market funds, on the other hand, is composed of individual bond funds for each of the eight (8) Emeap markets. During the initial stage, ABF2 will be confined to the investment of Emeap central banks. However, these Funds will be open to investments by other investors during the second phase. For the Philippine Sub Fund, BPI Asset Management will offer this to both individual and institutional investors by the second semester of this year. In photo: (from left) BPI vice president Roni Tapia-Merk, senior vice president Adelbert Legasto and vice president Ma. Theresa Marcial-Javier.

MFMCP SIGNS UP WITH ASIANLIFE AND GENERAL

The Mutual Fund Management Company of the Phils Inc (MFMCP), an investment management company, appoints AsianLife and General Assurance Corp as its insurer in providing personal accident insurance benefits for its shareholders. In photo are (from left) AsianLife and General EVP Bobby M. Alfonso and president and CEO Eulogio A. Mendoza, MFMCP president and CEO Phillip F.S. Hagedorn and executive director Joseph Chua.

2 MASONS TAKE ON CEMEX PALITADA KING CHALLENGE

Cemex Palitada King challenged two masons at the site of DM Ybanez Constraction's Casa Maria Nena High School in Obogan Town, Tanjay City Negros Oriental. Photo shows the mason on the left covering 1.54 m2 using ordinary cement for plastering while the mason on the right used Cemex Palitada King and covered 3.60 m2. Respected Negros Oriental architect Demosthenes Ybanez witness the 43 percent increase in area coverage between ordinary cement and Cemex Palitada King masonry cement. Architect Demosthenes Ybanez is one of the growing number of construction industry practitioners who are switching to using Cemex Palitada King for their plastering and finishing applications. Call Cemex Service Center at 849-3501 for more details.

PASSENGER SERVICING
3

SIA MOVES TO NEW OFFICE

Singapore Airlines (SIA) moved to its new location yesterday, at the 33rd floor of the LKG Tower of Ayala Avenue, Makati City. The new office is designed to offer added convenience to its customer. SIA has been in operations in the Philippines for 33 years.

71st Mapua grand alumni homecoming on May 21

"I AM proud to be a Mapuan" will still be the theme of this year's 71st grand alumni homecoming which will be held on Saturday, May 21, at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel in Ortigas Center. Registration starts at 5 p.m. This was jointly announced by chemist Hernando Limsin, president of National Association to Mapua Alumni (Nama) and engineer Dolores Legaspi-Lim, 1st vice president and over-all chair of this big event. The highlight of this year's big Mapua event is the presentation of the most prestigious award to the "The Outstanding Mapuan" TOM awardees. There will be 7 overseas and 7 local TOM awardees. The Golden (class 1955) and silver (class 1980) Jubilarians will also honored. There will be about 60 golden jubilarians who are expected to attend this year's grand alumni homecoming. Mapua alumni interested to join this grand alumni homecoming are requested to contact Rose Cruz (Nama office) at 527-1134 and Romina Apo at 939-4477.

UC honors Panagbenga 'Brains'

THE UNIVERSITY of the Cordilleras, on the occasion of its 59th Commencement Exercises, issued a university citation for the cultural institution known today as the "Panagbenga." The citation states that Panagbenga was "a cultural event that attained iconic stature in the eyes of hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the country." UC further stated that "the event became a national phenomenon, which spawned immense economic benefits for the metropolitan Baguio City-Benguet area; generating massive dividends for the business and agricultural sector thereon." The university citation focuses on the role of lawyer Damaso E. Bangaoet Jr who envisioned, designed, produced and directed the runaway successful event that impelled hundreds of thousands of visitors to troop to Baguio City to witness the renowned February Flower Festival.

Lawyer Bangaoet Jr addressed part of the 1,216 graduates of the University of the Cordilleras from the Colleges of: Engineering, Business Administration, Computer Science, and Accountancy on the first day of the university's 59th commencement exercises last May 13 (Friday) at the UC-Gymnasium. Twenty-five (25) UC honor graduates led by Alfred Jose Herbolario, Ph.D. Management, Magna Cum Laude and Mary Clair P. Comising, BSEd, Magna Cum Laude, and 32 presidential citation awardees; were honored by UC over the two-day 59th Commencement Exercises last May 13 and 14.

UC noted that: "Panagbenga" boosted the livelihood of farmers, tourism-related businesses and merchants on a scale that became the envy of cities and provinces throughout the country. As a result, scores of farms in Benguet province have switched from vegetable to flower farms, a consequence of the new revenue streams spawned by "Panagbenga". In its successful wake, mayors and governors from all over the country have been trying to pull off their own versions of "Panagbenga" in the respective turfs. "Panagbenga" brought immeasurable prestige to the image and good name of Baguio City, the UC citation concluded.

"It is important," UC stated in issuing the citation, "to recognize from time to time citizens and individuals of Baguio City whose private initiative, vision and passion has impacted in a dynamic and creative way the further development of the metropolitan Baguio City-Benguet area." UC noted that the initial investment that launched Panagbenga emanated from non-city resources at the initiative of lawyer Bangaoet.

A native of Baguio City, Bangaoet holds a Bachelor of Laws Degree "Cum Laude" - from SLU in 1971 and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree - from UP-Diliman in 1961.

After decades of establishing a prestigious law practice, Bangaoet was nominated to represent the Baguio community in the various boards of the BCDA-John Hay-Poro Point complex of agencies. Bangaoet's entry into these agencies proved to be a departure from the usual token representation of the Baguio community. Instead, he utilized his Board seat as a platform to create a historic project to the credit of both the BCDA agencies and the Baguio community.

Bangaoet then rose to become president of the John Hay-Poro Point Development Corporation (JHPPDC) from August 2000 to February 2001, after holding various strategic positions thereon.

As an outstanding citizen of Baguio, Bangaoet received citations inclusive of the Most Outstanding Citizen of Baguio Award in 2002; recognition from the Department of Tourism for having managed and steered the first seven (7) successful editions of the Baguio Flower Festival. At that point, Bangaoet relinquished the management and control of Panagbenga in favor of the City government and the City Council in 2003. Bangaoet received The Baguio City Vision Award in 2002.

Bangaoet is married to Laurel Contreras-Bangaoet, former director of the SLU Center of Culture and the Arts and the SLU Institute of Physical Education. They are proud parents of two children, Grace May and Damaso III, both Doctors of Medicine.

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SEMINAR SCHEDULE

June 5, 2005 (Sunday)

Session 1
11AM TO 11:50 AM CALL CENTER INDUSTRY OVERVIEW & COMMUNICATION SKILLS TRAINING
Mr. George Briñas and Ms. Jet Reynes, Call Center Academy

Session 2
1PM to 1:50PM PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT
Ms. Arlene Mogar, Powerspeak

Session 3
3PM TO 3:50PM ACQUIRING AMERI CAN ACCENT
Dr. Jose Mordeno, President, Speechpower

Session 4
4:30PM TO 5:20PM SPEAK BETTER ENGLISH
Ms. Christine Santos, Partner, YTC Tutorial and Review Center

Session 5
6PM TO 6:50PM ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS CAREER ALTERNATIVE
Mr. Mark Frederick H. So, CEO, Businessmaker Academy

June 6, 2005 (Monday)

Session 6
11AM TO 11:50 AM BUSINESS IDEAS WHILE IN-BETWEEN-JOBS
Mr. Mark Frederick H. So, CEO, Businessmaker Academy

Session 7
1PM TO 1:50PM DISCOVER YOUR PERSONAL POWER
Mr. Joey Reyes, President, Powerspeak

Session 8
3PM TO 3:50PM ACQUIRING AMERICAN ACCENT
Dr. Jose Mordeno, President, Speechpower

Session 9
4:30PM TO 5:20PM ENGLISH ENHANCEMENT FOR ALL PURPOSES (Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking Skills)
Ms. Christine Santos, Partner, YTC Tutorial and Review Center

Session10
6PM TO 6:50PM INCREASE YOUR JOB SEARCH SUCCESS
Ms. Jane Soco, Marketing Manager, JOBSDB.COM

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★KATIPUNAN Ext Coml/Resl nr UP Ateneo 204 to 1,200m² P8,500 up/m² 0918-9235216

HOUSE & LOT

LAS PINAS

Las Pinas Pilar VII 265 Sqm 3 Stry Prime Loc 6BR 7T&B 2 Tel.4 Carport near Alab Twn Cntr 6.8M 0917 8507252

MANDALUYONG

98sq.m 2Stry Hse Manda. Near SM-Megamall 531-9954

MARIKINA

Bnew 3BR 3TB 2.8M 9487112

PROVIDENT MARIKINA near gate w/ 3hses owner leaving P5M neg RUSH 948-8240

PARANAQUE

BF 25T-P4.5M 8278759

SAN JUAN

MANDALUYONG NR SHAW Bnew Twnhse 3stry 3br 3-4tb mdsrm 1-2grge P3.655M up 8903461

CAVITE

West Bay Homes
Near SM Bacoor
(02) 2598074/0927-7983239

OTHER AREAS

Tagaytay H/L P2.M-312SQM 8278759

BULACAN

1800/mo-20yrs Tel 9390299

3,400/mo-25yrs Tel 5208410

LAGUNA

Hse & Lot Sta Rosa Laguna Bel-Air Edna 0917-8312369

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

1.1 M NR MAKATI ORTIGAS
10T/mo or 4 yrs 0% Int
10% DP Move-In 2-4 BR
Bank & Pag-Ibig Ok 0920-6348545

1.1M C5 Nr The Fort
10T/mo. or 4Yrs. No Int. or 10% D.P. LIPAT AGAD 2-4BR 15min Fr Mktl 0917-8313226

CONDO nr. D'Fort
nr Makati/Ortigas CBDs 10%DP Move-In 1st Class Amenities Mark 0921-8165150

MAKATI/MLA. CONDO SALE /RENT 0920-2403601

Oriental Gardens Makati 45.5m² 2.7&up Roselyn 0920-3843962

MANILA

BAY GARDEN ROXAS BLVD 1,2,3BR 0920-9602940 RFO

SN ANDRES MANILA Bnew Twnhse/3stry/3br/3tb/grge P3.860M up 8903461 loc 34

MANDALUYONG

CONDO, BNEW, 09192189817

PASIG

CONDO nr. Ortigas & Mktl RFO 10%DP • 0915-5812705

Galleria Corp Ctr 107m² FF 4.8M 6873372/0917-8102903

QUEZON CITY

Cubao P1.5M Terms 9126976

OTHER AREAS

Boracay Condotel 3.8M
EARN P520T/Yr. ROI 5Yrs. P75T/mo. or 1Yr. No Interest Fully Furnished 0917-8169849

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D' FORT 307 FA
REGENT TOWER 29 FLR. VIEW
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LOT

KALOOCAN

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MAKATI

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LAS PIÑAS

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RIZAL

Beverly Hills 862sqm 842-5621

Sacramento Tanay 1000sqm 8425621

LAGUNA

192&271m². Adj. Financing Avail. Southpeak1, San Pedro 09206540954

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PARANAQUE

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HOUSE

PARANAQUE

Multinti VIII 3BR 2TB
Covered Grge 0915-5627080

QUEZON CITY

Scout 2-Sty House 3723326

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

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CTL8 Furn 1BR P13T 9299835

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MEGAPLAZA STUDIO BARE P11T/mo Call 8204392/8252434

APARTMENT

KALOOCAN

EDSA CALOOCAN 3FLRS COML W/BODEGA 3612663 3610652

MAKATI

OFC / RES 3 FLRS 0917-8860440 FINLANDIA

7030 D. WILSON ST MKT NR MKT MED (0917)5405281

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

MARIKINA

Nr Ateneo Montevista
1BR 1TB P7T grge 6819583

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BF P'QUE P200!! 8257524

•FURNISH PASAY 8872865•

Nr LSalle 3BR 3Sty 8992148

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MALATE MLA 526-8048/49

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HOUSE & LOT

4RENT & SALE 0917-8860440 GREENWOODS PASIG

LAS PINAS

Duplex 109M² 3.5M 2855129

CONDO/TWHSE/ FOR SALE/RENT

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MAKATI

Makati Manila RFO CONDO Sale / Rent 15K up 09176266516

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CARS FOR RENT

CarsVans CoasterBus 422-9206

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CARS FOR RENT

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CARS/VANS/BRIDAL 8969956

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1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% W/O TAKING CAR 5221001

1.5% w/oTaking Car 7226942-43

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/o taking car 7880183-84

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8956630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 3732081/82

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/out taking car 6567685

2% w/out taking car 5315577

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PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is herby given that the estate of Domingo Yambao was extrajudicially settled among his heirs per Doc. No. 22, Page No. 5, Book No. 189, Series of 2005 before Notary Public Atty. Ramiro Osorio of Quezon City.
(PDI-May 5, 12 & 19, 2005)

NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE OF LOSS
Notice is given that United Paragon Mining Corp. Stock Certificates No. 12094, 10835 & 9074, and Filinvest Land, Inc. Stock Certificate No. 67552 issued to MDR SECURITIES, INC., has been lost. If no contest is recieved new certificate will be issue.
(PDI-May 12, 19, 26, 2005)

DBP

Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on May 31, 2005, 2:00 p.m., Auditorium, of the DBP Head Office, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City for the following properties on CASH BASIS:

CODE REAL ESTATE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM SELLING PRICE
METRO MANILA			
COM-7	No. 19, Road 7, Pag-asa, Quezon City	240 m² residential/commercial lot (TCT No. N-209551) with bldg. & imp.	P 5,500,000.00
BATAAN			
	Sta. Monica Homes, Sitio Wiswis, Camaya, Mariveles	Residential lots with bldg. & imp.:	
AM-ED-057	Lot - 8 Blk - 8	50 m² TCT No. T-229471	P 175,600.00
AM-ED-058	12 9	50 m² TCT No. T-229472	P 186,200.00
AM-ED-059	14 20	50 m² TCT No. T-229492	P 182,500.00
AM-ED-060	27 20	50 m² TCT No. T-229480	P 175,000.00
BATANGAS			
AM-MC-061	Bo. Bawi, Padre Garcia	4,545 m² agro-industrial lot (TCT T-127899) with bldg. & imp.	P 2,464,600.00
BULACAN			
AM-ED-062	Camia St., Manzano Subd., Brgy. Ibayo, Marilao	294 m² residential lot (TCT T-351876)	P 1,176,000.00
CAVITE			
	Philhomes Ville I, Brgy. Toclong, Kawit	Residential lots with bldg. & imp.:	
AM-ED-063	Lot - 20 Blk - 11	32 m² TCT No. T-1101809	P 318,900.00
AM-MC-064	7 11	32 m² TCT No. T-1101808	P 223,800.00
LAGUNA			
	St. Joseph Village 6, Phase I, Cabuyao	Residential lots with bldg. & imp.:	
AM-MC-065	Lot - 3 Blk - 11	40 m² TCT No. T-605765	P 187,600.00
AM-ED-066	6 5	40 m² TCT No. T-605719	P 209,200.00
AM-PY-067	8 8	46 m² TCT No. T-605767	P 204,400.00
AM-MC-068	10 8	40 m² TCT No. T-605766	P 212,100.00
AM-MC-069	16 8	40 m² TCT No. T-599208	P 187,600.00
AM-MC-070	27 1	40 m² TCT No. T-605764	P 196,000.00
AM-CP-071	Lot 23 Blk 2 San Pablo St., San Carlos Village, Brgy. Banay-Banay, Cabuyao	66 m2 residential lot (TCT T-536564) with bldg. & imp.	P 252,100.00
AM-CP-072	Lot 53, Blk 24, So. Fairway Homes Classic, Landayan, San Pedro	45 m² residential lot (TCT No. T-605718) with bldg. & imp.	P 330,000.00
RIZAL			
AM-JA-073	San Jose, Montalban (now Rodriguez)	10,000 m² agro-residential lot (TCT No. 454354)	P 4,790,700.00

BIDDERS ARE REMINDED:

1. To inspect the properties to determine their actual condition before the bidding;
2. To submit in DBP's official bid form available at the AMD-Acquired Assets, 2nd Floor, DBP Head Office during office hours; and
3. To be on time. No bids will be accepted once unsealing of the bids commences. The sale shall be subject to other terms and conditions which may be imposed by the Bank.

DBP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE BANK IS FINAL AND BINDING.

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers: 892-1566/893-7172 or 818-9511 local 2218/2252 for Code starting with AM; 926-1686 and 920-4909 for Code starting with COM.

ASSET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

(PDI – May 19 & 20, 2005)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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P/T 1-2yrs call ctr/phone English Ctr Exp. w/ american accent 100/hr Apply at CRM III Bldg. Rm 301,106 Kamias Rd. QC 4330961 CJ Call n Talk Inc.
Interview
May 18,20,24 & 26 ,2005

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

Visit the SSS Website for Bid Invitations

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID

BULK PURCHASE OF SUPPLIES & MATERIALS FOR THE 2nd SEMESTER CY 2005

The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM is inviting bidders to apply for eligibility & to bid for the bulk purchase of supplies and materials requirements for the second semester of CY 2005:

Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for each category:

• Paper & Paper Products	P 6,829,177.50
• EDP Supplies	P 8,806,178.00
• Computer Supplies	P 4,848,150.00
• Printed Forms	P 6,644,425.75
• Supplies – Others	P 358,144.35
Contract Duration	Staggered delivery but not to exceed six (6) months
Source of Fund	Supplies & Materials

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Particulars	Date	Venue
Issuance of eligibility requirements	May 19 to June 06, 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Deadline of submission of eligibility requirements	June 09, 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Issuance of Bidding Documents to Eligible Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee, as follows: • Paper & Paper Products – P5,000.00 • EDP Supplies – P5,000.00 • Computer Supplies – P1,000.00 • Printed Forms – P5,000.00 • Supplies – Others – P500.00	June 14, 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr. SSS Main Bldg.
Pre-Bid Conference	June 17, 2005, 2:00 p.m	President's Board Room, 6th Floor, SSS Main Bldg.
Submission & Opening of Bids shall be announced and confirmed through a Bid Bulletin.		

For any inquiry, please call telephone numbers 922-2991 or 920-6401 local 5490/ 5491

This bidding shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act."

The SSS reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI–May 19, 2005)

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MALE

MKTG. OFFICER M 9151390-94

Massuer 18-25yo 09204540607

PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

ANNOUNCEMENT
Notice is hereby given that the lease purchase agreement of MR ALBINO D RODRIGUEZ of Block 6 Lot 5 Bonanza Phase IV Homeowners Dwellers Association Inc is hereby terminated.
This notice is in compliance with the rules & regulations of National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation
(PDI – May 19, 2005)

INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS

Cubao branch is open to serve your Classified Ads requirements.

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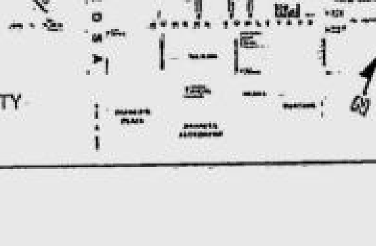
891 G/F, ST. ANTHONY'S BLDG.
AURORA BLVD. COR. OXFORD ST., CUBAO, QUEZON CITY
TEL. NO.: 912-9008 TO 11
Contact Persons: Aileen, Pat, Adel & Iris



PRISM
PRIVATE SECTOR MOBILIZATION FOR FAMILY PLANNING

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Scope of Work

Market Development Director

Background:

The PRISM Project supports USAID/Philippines' Strategic Objective 3, *Desired family size and improved health sustainably achieved*, focusing on three components: 1) increased **workplace** support for FP services and referrals, 2) establishment of viable, mass **market** brands of hormonal contraceptives, and 3) increased business value of FP among **private practice** providers.

The market development component (component 2) of the project is intended to increase recognition of business opportunities in the hormonal FP commodities market in the Philippines and to motivate businesses to take advantage of those opportunities. The Market Development Director will be responsible for developing and implementing activities to accomplish these objectives.

General Tasks:

1. Review the project technical proposal and other relevant background documentation, including USAID/Philippines strategic plan, documents from other relevant projects in the Philippines (past and present) such as CMS, research results on marketing programs and initiatives, the project's 1st annual work plan (when completed), DHS reports, etc.
2. Participate in annual project work planning processes and prepare market development component annual plans.
3. Work with the Finance and Administrative Officer to prepare annual market development component activities budgets.
4. Coordinate with the Workplace and Private Practice Directors to identify and capitalize on potential synergies in project strategy development and implementation across components.
5. Collaborate with the M&E Specialist to monitor and evaluate market development component activities.
6. Work with the MIS Specialist to develop and maintain a database of FP commodity sales, and forecasts of future sales, across the public, social marketing and commercial sectors by type and brand.
7. Prepare and submit required project reports on time.
8. Work with the Communications Officer to develop and implement public relations campaigns to inform project stakeholders about the project, its aims and purposes.
9. Work with the Gender Specialist to ensure that gender perspectives are properly incorporated into all market development component activities.
10. Work with other technical and management staff to develop approaches and strategies to anticipate, prevent and counteract potential opposition to project activities from social forces such as faith-based groups.
11. Complete other tasks and assignments as deemed appropriate by the Chief of Party.

Specific Tasks

Component 1: Workplace

1. Support market development inputs to ensure availability of affordable contraceptives for distribution to workplace programs and services.
2. Work with the Workplace Director to support companies managing work place initiatives to institute cost recovery mechanisms where necessary.
3. Work with the Workplace Director to support companies to analyze the cost benefits of provision of FP services through producing cost benefit calculators.

Component 2: Market Development

1. Supervise and oversee activities of the Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao Market Development Managers to implement all strategies and activities listed in the Market Development Director's scope of work
2. Work with the Workplace and Private Practice Directors and the Associations Liaison Officer to maintain close working relationships with the associations of manufacturers, distributors, health providers and pharmacists engaged in the project.
3. Establish and maintain close working relationships with DKT, manufacturers, importers, and distributors of FP commodities.
4. Establish and maintain a working relationship with the LEAD project to obtain information about business opportunities to market contraceptives to LGUs for distribution through public sector outlets.
5. Ensure that information about LGU business opportunities and other business opportunities such as midwife entrepreneurs and private practice providers flows to contraceptive manufacturers and distributors.
6. Assist manufacturers and distributors to define strategies to take advantage of business opportunities, particularly with respect to introduction of new brands or methods, and pricing.
7. Work with the BCC Advisor to develop mass media programs and campaigns to generate demand for private sector FP products and services, including motivating movement of non-poor FP clients from public to private sources and among new users.
8. Work with the Policy/Advocacy Advisor to define and manage a public relations /advertising component with respect to policy and regulatory change important to commercial manufacturers, importers and distributors.
9. Establish and manage a relationship with DKT, and provide technical assistance to promote progress towards sustainability of their product line without donor subsidies.
10. Work closely with the Policy and Advocacy Advisors to identify policy issues relating to the private sector FP manufacturers, distributors and to the advertising and promotion of FP products and services, and asset to implement policy initiatives.
11. Work with the Financing Advisor to develop and manage relationships with national health insurance organizations to expand coverage of FP products and services.

Component 3: Private Practice

1. Support market development inputs to ensure availability of affordable contraceptives for distribution to midwives and private practice providers participating in project activities.
2. Work with the Private Practice Director to develop and manage the signage, materials and marketing requirements of the midwives component.
3. Work with Private Practice Director to implement project activities to motivate distributors' sales forces (detail men) to encourage private practice physicians to prescribe and/or sell contraceptive products.
4. Work with the Private Practice Director to supply marketing inputs to the work of health provider associations to promote FP provision to their members.
5. Provide technical advice and support to the Private Practice Director and the Pharmacy Advisor for development and implementation of a program to support improved counseling and sales of FP products through drug stores.

Reporting:

The Market Development Director will report directly to Chemonics' Chief of Party or his designee, who will be responsible for monitoring the director's overall performance.

Qualifications:

- With at least 20 years of experience in marketing of products in the commercial healthcare industry
- With at least 15 years managerial experience
- Preferably with masteral degree
- Excellent in written and oral communications
- Proficient in Word, Excel, Powerpoint

Interested applicants should e-mail their application letter and CV at jobs@prism.org.ph on or before 25th of May 2005

Republic of the Philippines
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES SYSTEM
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION

The University of the Philippines System invites interested parties/ contractors/ developers to submit proposals and enter into negotiated procurement to lease and develop the North Science and Technology Park Phase I, consisting of 37.5 hectares, more or less, located along Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City pursuant to Sections 53 and 35 of Republic Act No. 9184.

The UP S&T Park offers access to the University's academic resources, IT infrastructure, support services, and many other unique location advantages, such as: research-active PhD faculty, specialized research and training laboratories, specialized libraries in different fields, computing facilities, fiberoptic network, training rooms and short- and long-term accommodation facilities; and sports, shopping and community amenities.

Project proponents should be duly registered and existing corporations and/or consortia with strong financial capability and a minimum net worth of PhP1 Billion for 2004, at least 50% Filipino-owned and with relevant experience in undertaking projects on a similar scale as the proposed development. A formal proposal for the planning, development and management of the Project shall include a detailed plan for developing the property as a prospective lessee for 25 years. The proposal shall conform to the land use plan, S&T conceptual framework plan, and development plans of UP; and include an implementation schedule, amount and timing of investment outlays, and detailed level of resource commitment. These information shall be contained in the proposal consisting of two parts: the technical proposal and the financial proposal.

Forms and Terms of Reference (TOR) may be obtained from the UP S&T Park Secretariat, Office of the Vice-President for Development (OVPD), 3/F Quezon Hall, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, upon payment of non-refundable fee of P3,000.00. Deadline for submission of technical and financial proposals will be on Monday, August 1, 2005. After the evaluation of the documents submitted, the developers shall be duly notified of the schedule of subsequent activities. For inquiries, please call Tel/Fax No. 928-2888; or Tel 981-8500 loc. 2506 or 2542 (c/o Ms. Nelda G. Gutierrez) email: nelda.gutierrez@up.edu.ph

The University reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals or parts thereof, to waive any required formality in the proposals received, or to accept such proposals or to award any part thereof to any proponent/s whose proposal/s is/are considered most advantageous to the University. The University assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any firm for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of proposals, nor does it guarantee that a selection will be made.

(Sgd.)RAFAEL A. RODRIGUEZ
Vice-President for Development

(PDI - May 18 & 19, 2005)

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Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City

BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITIONS

In Compliance with RA 7041

BUREAU OF RESIDENT OMBUDSMAN (BRO)

GRAFT INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OFFICER I; Item No. OMBA-GIO1-96-1998; SG-26; Education: Bachelor of Laws; Experience: Three (3) years of experience in the practice of law, counselling, investigation/prosecution of cases, hearings of administrative/criminal cases, legal research or other related work; Training: 24 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: RA 1080 (BAR).

Interested applicants should submit within ten (10) working days from the date of this publication to the Human Resource Management Division at the above address, the following requirements:

1. A letter stating the position applied for;
2. Duly accomplished Personal Data Sheet (CSC Form 212);
3. 1"x1" Picture (colored);
4. *Bar/Board Rating or CSC Certificate of Eligibility;
5. *Transcript of Records;
6. * Certificates of Seminars/Trainings attended;
7. *Service Records or Certificates from previous/present employers stating the positions assumed and corresponding actual duties and responsibilities (if applicable);
8. *Performance Appraisal Reports for the last two rating periods (for current government employees only);
9. Statement duly signed by the applicant as to any relative(s) within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, currently employed with the office of the Ombudsman)

*Where photocopies are filed, the documents must be certified as true copies by the proper authorities or the applicant may present the originals to the Human Resource Management Officer for comparison with photocopies.

Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY
San Ramon, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY AND COLLECTION SYSTEM FOR THE ZAMBOANGA CITY SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY [DESIGN AND BUILD SCHEME]

Modular Construction of Initial Facility at 300 cu.m./day

Design Criteria ---

Influent	BOD5	450 ppm maximum
	Oils & Grease	20 ppm
	Suspended Solids	400 ppm maximum

The Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority (ZCSEZA) will require the design and construction of a wastewater treatment facility with a collection system using the existing drainage system with an independent add-on wastewater collection system for its First Industrial Park. The Industrial Park is located at Barangay San Ramon, Zamboanga City. The water treatment facility will need to comply with current effluent standards and should demonstrate flexibility in complying with future effluent standards based on the Philippine Clean Water Act. A modular system with the ability to adapt to the increasing hydraulic load of the industrial park is required. The ZCSEZA will enforce waste acceptance criteria for the facility which will ensure the quality of wastewater to be treated by the facility. The required wastewater treatment plan must demonstrate proven technology, consistency in performance and flexibility in adapting to more stringent effluent standards.

1. The Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority (ZCSEZA), through the Corporate Operating Budget 2005 intends to apply the sum of **FIFTEEN MILLION SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P15,600,000.00)** being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for **"Wastewater Treatment Facility and Collection System for the Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority [Design and Build Scheme]"**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening
2. The ZCSEZA now invites potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for **"Wastewater Treatment Facility and Collection System for the Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority [Design and Build Scheme]"**. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the eligibility forms. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The deadline for submission of eligibility documents shall be on or before June 13, 2005. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted unless otherwise stated to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR Part A of R.A. 9184, only bids from Bidders who pass an eligibility check will be opened. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. Interested Bidders shall secure the Eligibility documents, upon their submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI Form available at the address given below), from the BAC Secretariat at the address stated below, on or before June 06, 2005. They shall submit the accomplished Eligibility documents, in order for these to be received by the BAC Secretariat in the same address, on or before June 13, 2005.
5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from ZCSEZA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from June 20 to 27, 2005.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P2,500.00)**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative from June 20 to 27, 2005.
7. The ZCSEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on July 18, 2005 at 9:00 a.m. at the Conference Hall, Ground Floor Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below at or before **August 01, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of **Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, or Manager's Check** and in an amount of One Hundred Fifty Six Thousand Pesos (P156,000.00). Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on August 01, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. at the Conference Hall, Ground Floor Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at **August 01, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.**
9. The ZCSEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders

(Sgd.) GEORGINA PANTALEON-YU
Chairman and Administrator
Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority
Administration Building, San Ramon, Zamboanga City

(PDI - May 19 & 26, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Nueva Ecija
MUNICIPALITY OF GENERAL M. NATIVIDAD
-o0o-
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Government of the Philippines through the Department of Land Reform (DLR) has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) toward the cost of Agrarian Reform Communities Project (ARCP). It is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contracts for Rural Infrastructure Component for which this Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid is issued.
2. The Municipality of General M. Natividad, Nueva Ecija as implementing partner of the DLR for ARCP, invites contractors classified and registered with the Philippine Contractor's Accreditation Board (PCAB) as Medium "A" or higher for similar contract to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following projects:

Name of Project	Tala-Piñahan Farm to market Road (Phase II)
Approved Budget Cost	P7,618,348.84
Length	1,352 meters
Estimated Duration	175 calendar days
Scope of Work	Concreting/riprapping and installation of various pipe culverts

Minimum Required Equipments:

1 unit Bulldozer (120 hp)
1 unit Road Grader (125 hp)
1 unit Road Roller (10 Tons)
1 unit Backhoe (0.75 cu.m.)
1 unit Payloader (75B)
4 units Dump Truck (10 wheeler)
1 unit Water Truck (1,500 gal. Cap.)
2 units Concrete Mixer (1 bagger)
2 units Concrete Vibrator
2 units Concrete Screeder

3. Schedule of Bidding Activities

• Submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) And application for eligibility	June 03, 2005
• Issuance of Bidding Documents	May 26 to June 07, 2005
• Pre-Bid Conference	June 13, 2005 @ 10:00 a.m.
• Submission and Opening of Bids	June 28, 2005 @ 10:00 a.m.

4. Prospective bidders should secure and fill up the Information Sheets from the BAC Secretariat c/o Mrs. Angelina T. Albino at the Municipal Planning and Development Office, Municipal Building, General M. Natividad with contact number at 0920-4123698.
5. Unless otherwise indicated as the Instructions to Bidders or other bidding and contract documents, all particulars relative to the procurement and contract implementation shall be governed by RA 9184 and its IRR-A.
6. Bidding documents will be issued to eligible bidders at the office of the BAC Secretariat at the Municipal Treasurer's Office upon payment of non-refundable fee of Php. 5,000.00 per set.
7. The Local Government Unit of General M. Natividad reserves the right to accept or reject any Bids, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) FERNANDO S. BERNARDO
BAC Chairman

(PDI - May 19 & 26, 2005)

NOTICE OF LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

Notice is hereby given that following an Order issued under Section 8 of the Organised and Serious Crimes Ordinance, Cap 455 of the Laws of Hong Kong the assets of the Respondents in Hong Kong were confiscated. On 5th May 2005 the Restraint Order over the assets of the Respondents HCMP 4221 of 2002 was then discharged.

Amador PASTRANA Philippines passport ZZ017001 Date of birth 4th May 1972.	Respondent 1
Alpha Company Ltd Company No 15011	Respondent 2
Jindell Investment Ltd Company No 367520	Respondent 3
Jupiter Advisory Ltd Company No 407452	Respondent 4
First Pacific Company Ltd Company No 7009	Respondent 5
Systems International Ltd Company No 105043B	Respondent 6
Calimax Enterprises Ltd Company No 407451	Respondent 7
Cyplus Company Ltd Company No 114160B	Respondent 8
Jopio Company Ltd Company No 16592	Respondent 9
Nobuko Investments Ltd Company No 371740	Respondent 10
Prudence International Ltd Company No 16156	Respondent 11
Wains International Company Ltd Company No 391025	Respondent 12
Moneycare International Ltd Company No 407450	Respondent 13
Chamomile International Ltd Company No 741159	Respondent 14
Highstone Investments Ltd Company No 112158B	Respondent 15
Sabre International Ltd Company No 6470	Respondent 16
Vantage International Management Group Inc. Company No 8403	Respondent 17
Union Trading Ltd Company No 15014	Respondent 18
Novelle Investment Partners Ltd (Bahamas) Company No 81563B	Respondent 19
United Resources Asset Management Inc SEC Reg No A200005310	Respondent 20
Allied European Holdings Ltd Company No 8313	Respondent 21

Any person or company who is a Respondent can obtain a copy of the order from either Ma. Elmira A. Alconaba, Assistant Director, Compliance and Enforcement Department Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, or Detective Senior Inspector David COPE, Financial Investigations Division, Hong Kong Police, 21st Floor, Arsenal House West Wing, Police Headquarters, Arsenal Street, Wan Chai, Hong Kong. HCMP 4221 of 2002 refers.

(PDI – May 19, 20 & 21, 2005)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PD REF. NO. PB-050420-PP0032 / PR NO. TTSD-05-000009528

The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARD COMMITTEE FOR HEAD OFFICE**, wishes to invite interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid on the item listed below:

Quantity	Item Description	PR No.	Approved Budget
	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOWING ATI MICROWAVE RADIO PROPRIETARY SPARE PARTS:	TTSD-05-000000 9528	
3 PCS.	ITEM I : RADIO FREQUENCY UNIT (RFU) POWER SUPPLY, Part No. 100-01852		P 846,877.50
3 PCS.	ITEM 2 : RFU RECEIVER SYNTHESIZER Part No. 100-03802		P 1,469,745.00
1 PC.	ITEM 3 : DIGITAL INTERFACE UNIT (DIU) POWER SUPPLY, Part No. 100-04816		P 104,880.00
	TOTAL		P 2,421,502.50

1. Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting **May 11, 2005 to June 02, 2005** from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00)** per set.
2. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before **10:00 A.M. of June 03, 2005** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date is declared non-working day, the new deadline for submission shall be announced through a Bid Bulletin. Submission of documents must be clear, legible and readable. Late submission and/or incomplete bid documents shall not be accepted.
3. Pre-bid conference will be held on **May 18, 2005 at 4:00 P.M.** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
4. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
5. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the corporation.
6. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) ANTONIO G. LABAYANI
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – May 13 & 19, 2005)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that **TERESITA C. ALISASIS** and **REGULO B. COLOMA** are charged the crime of **FALSIFICATION OF A PUBLIC DOCUMENT** in Criminal Case No. 224450 before Branch 50 Metropolitan Trial Court Caloocan City.

They are being accused of confederating together in preparing a Deed of Absolute Sale and affixing the signature of **DIEGA ZUNIGA** to make it appear that **DIEGA ZUNIGA** sold a parcel of land consisting of 46,604 sq. meters situated at Bagombong Caloocan City covered by TCT No. 15715 to **TERESITA C. ALISASIS** when in truth and in fact no such transaction took place.

The public is warned that subject property covered by TCT No. 15715 now covered by TCT No. 361269 in the name of **TERESITA C. ALISASIS** is not for sale.

(Sgd.) **DIEGA ZUNIGA** represented
by son **RAFAEL ZUNIGA DULALIA**

(PDI - May 19, 2005)

THE
HERITAGE PARK
FORT BONIFACIO
Funeral Home and Crematory
845-2334 to 38; 845-2440

OBITUARIES

Manila Memorial Park
Leading the Way
SUCAT
HOLY CROSS
DASMARIÑAS
CEBU
DAVAO
(632) 815 1875 or 90
(632) 893 8374 to 77
BULACAN

In Loving Memory
On the 10th Death Anniversary of

Wenceslao R. de la Paz

(September 18, 1941 to May 20, 1995)

former Chairman of the National Power Corporation
and Presidential Advisor on Energy Affairs

His wife, **Corazon** and daughter **Maria Cristina**,
request relatives, friends and the pious
readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul
and to remember him always in their prayers.

**Holy Masses will be offered in his memory
at the following churches:**

Sanctuario de San Antonio *Forbes Park, Makati*	May 20, 7:30 AM 12:15 NOON & 6:00 PM
Sanctuario de San Jose *Greenhills, San Juan, M.M.*	May 20, 7:15 AM
Mary The Queen Church *Greenhills, San Juan, M.M.*	May 20, 6:00 PM
Pateros Catholic Church *Pateros, Metro Manila*	May 20, 6:30 PM
SSS Chapel *SSS Building, Diliman, Quezon City*	May 19, 12:00 NOON

Our Dearly Beloved

Victoria Garcia Tungol

widow of the late **Anacleto S. Tungol Sr.**

Peacefully joined our Lord on May 18, 2005, at the age of 98.

Her bereaved children: **Carding** (†) & **Liza**, **Cezar** (†) & **Virgie**, **Dolfo** & **Gloria**, **Loleng** & **Ely**, **Kap Anacleto (Jun) Tungol, Jr.** & **Julie**, **Beth** (†) and **Baby**, **Nerie** (†) & **Thor**, **Rolly** & **Linda**, **Maning** & **Tess**; grandchildren & other relatives & friends request to join them in praying for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her body lies in state at the Tungol Residence, San Isidro (Quenabuan) Sta. Ana, Pampanga. Interment will be at St. Anne Memorial, Sta. Ana, Pampanga on Saturday May 21, 2005 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the family residence.

Our Dearly Beloved

GERARDO JOSE S. LOPEZ

September 30, 1964 to May 15, 2005

Peacefully joined our Lord after a brave battle with cancer.

His loving wife **Mary Geraldine**; sons **Joaquin** and **Sebastian**; parents **Drs. Jose** and **Milagros Lopez**; parents-in-law: **Wilfrido** and **Teresita Villarama**; brother and sister-in-law: **Juan** and **Maria Victoria**; sister and brother-in-law: **Melinda** and **Roberto Garcia**; sister: **Cristina**; brother: **Antonio Deogracias**; in-laws: **Rafael** and **Bonita Rufino**; **Christopher** and **Rinna Gustillo**; **Celeste** and **Clarie Estrella**; nephews **Anton** and **Noah**; nieces: **Carmela** and **Gianna**; and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Necrological services will be offered today, May 19, 2005, 3:00 p.m. at the Heritage Park Chapel. Interment will follow immediately.

Standard Chartered

In Memory
of

GERARDO JOSE "JERRY" S. LOPEZ

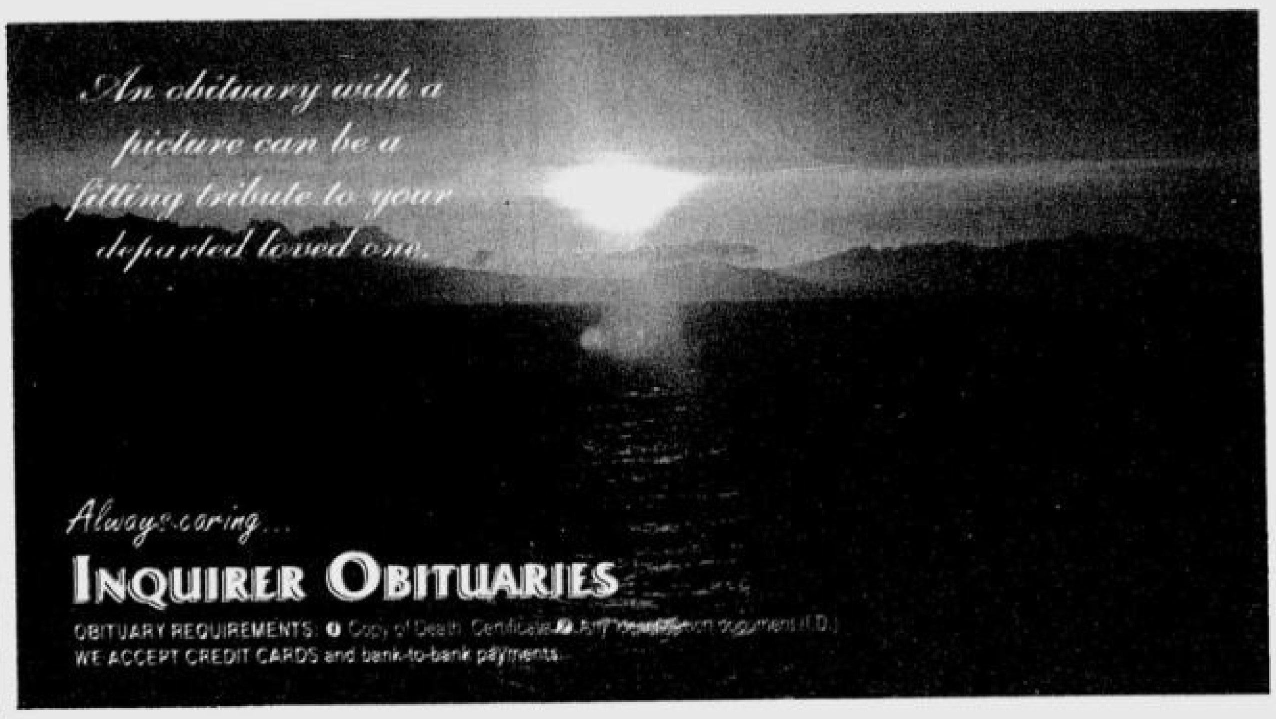
The Management and Staff of Standard Chartered Bank deeply mourn the passing of **GERARDO JOSE "JERRY" S. LOPEZ**, Head of SCB Philippines' Large Local Corporates, Client Relationships, on Sunday, May 15, 2005 after a brave battle with cancer.

We extend our heartfelt sympathies and condolences to Jerry's devoted and loving wife Mary Geraldine, and his beloved sons, Joaquin and Sebastian.

Jerry was a seasoned and dedicated Senior Banker with a vibrant spirit and generous heart. Those of us who have had the privilege of knowing him are inspired by his strength of character, humbled by his courage and deeply touched by his concern for others even under the most trying circumstances.

The quality of his relationships with his colleagues, business partners and clients speaks eloquently of his enduring success as a Banker and far exceeds the magnitude of his contribution to the Bank.

He will be greatly missed by all of us.


An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES
OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification documents (I.D.)
WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments.

CLASSIFIEDS

CENTRAL PANGASINAN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
San Carlos City, Pangasinan
Tel. Nos. 532-2222 / 532-3146

INVITATION TO BID

Central Pangasinan Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CENPELCO) with office address at Padilla St., San Carlos City, Pangasinan is in need of conductors and electrical equipments intended for its rehabilitation and upgrading projects. Listed below are the required specifications and quantity:

PACKAGE I - CONDUCTORS

	PARTICULARS	QUANTITY
1.	Conductor, Bare, ACSR # 1/0 AWG	12,000 meters
2.	Conductor, Bare, ACSR # 2/0 AWG	20,000 meters
3.	Duplex Wire # 1/0	60,000 meters

PACKAGE II - DISTRIBUTION LINE EQUIPMENTS

	PARTICULARS	QUANTITY
1.	Power Shunt Capacitor 100 kVAR, 7620 Volts, 60 Hz, 95 kV BIL, Single Phase Double Bushing, Outdoor Type, Built-in Discharge Resistor	6 units
2.	Power Shunt Capacitor 50 kVAR, 7620 Volts, 60 Hz, 95 kV BIL, Single Phase Double Bushing, Outdoor Type, Built-in Discharge Resistor	3 units

We are inviting responsible suppliers to participate in a sealed bid to be submitted to PBAC on May 26, 2005 (Thursday) at 2:00 p.m. (1400 hrs) at CENPELCO main office, Padilla St., San Carlos City, Pangasinan wherein your bid will be opened in your presence or that of your representative.

Request further to include in your sealed bids/proposals the **delivery date, terms of payment and availability of stock** for evaluation purposes. Bid for one or two items only is acceptable. The BID BOND is either in the form of cash or manager's check equivalent to two and a half percent (2½%) of the total bid price or surety bond equivalent to ten percent (10%) of the total bid price. Bid bond less than the required amount will be automatically disqualified. Bids/proposals submitted beyond the specified date and time will not be accepted.

CENPELCO RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, WAIVE ANY OF THE REQUIRED FORMALITY THEREIN AND ACCEPTS THE BIDS ONLY DEEMED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE COOPERATIVE.

(Sgd.) RODRIGO F. CORPUZ
PBAC Chairman

Noted by:

(Sgd.) JOSEFINA D. MANDAPAT
Officer-in-Charge

(Sgd.) ENGR. EDGARDO R. PIAMONTE
Project Supervisor

(PDI - May 17 & 19, 2005)

Humor as a marketing tool

"MABABAW nga ba ang Pinoy?" "Tanga nga ba ang Pinoy?"

These are the questions that Joselito B. Ortega, Chair and CEO of BrandLab, Inc., will seek to answer when a he delivers a talk on "Advertising Convergence: Bringing Filipino Consumers Closer to the Brand through Humor" at the 36th National Marketing Conference of the Philippine Marketing Association (PMA).

Ortega revealed that 80 percent of advertising is humor based. However, he stressed that just because you can make consumers laugh does not mean you can make them buy.

"*Pinoys* might be easy to please but they are not stupid," Ortega said.

"During my session I will be discussing how marketers can effectively use humor to promote their brands," Ortega said.

"I will be discussing a compilation of interesting facets of humor in advertising that has sent light messages to the market but delivered solid bottom results to target sales," Ortega, who is also a past president of the PMA said.

For his talk Ortega surveyed about 40 experts in the "humor business"—from creative directors, to scriptwriters, to TV comedians, and stand-up comedians, as well as other professionals involved in the trade of making people laugh.

"I will reveal some fresh insights that we got from interviewing the likes of Jon Santos, Joey de Leon, Michael V, Mitch Valdez, among others," Ortega said.

Ortega is just one of the local and foreign marketing experts who will discuss how marketers can respond to extreme marketing challenges by pushing their brands to the limits, going beyond market expectations and conquering the interests and purchasing powers of consumers at the Conference.

The theme of this year's Conference is "Extreme Marketing Challenge: The Road to Convergence." The conference, which is expected to gather a thousand marketing professionals from all over the country, will be held on May 25 to 26, 2005 at the Westin Philippine Plaza.

For inquiries, please call the Philippine Marketing Association Secretariat at telephone numbers 634-4890, 634-5722, 636-1451 or email pma@philonline.com.

Extreme Marketing: Pushing your limits in a crisis economy

THE PHILIPPINES has been suffering major social, political, and economic blows that have pushed businesses to re-think traditional strategies and philosophies.

Marketers, for one, have realized that some traditional marketing philosophies are no longer effective in meeting the extreme marketing challenges of today.

According to Mr. Bienvenido Policarpio, senior vice president of the Prudential Group of Companies, marketers must now change their philosophy as they push their limits in responding to the challenges of a of a crisis economy.

"Marketers must now come up with new strategies and philosophies to effectively respond to extreme marketing challenges," said Policarpio who is also the president of Dale Carnegie Philippines.

Policarpio will be discussing some of the business philosophies surrounding extreme marketing that have maximized marketing potentials in a challenging convergent environment aptly applied to the Asian region, particularly the Philippines at the 36th National Marketing Conference of the Philippine Marketing Association (PMA).

The theme of this year's conference is "Extreme Marketing Challenge: The Road to Convergence." The conference, which is expected to gather a thousand marketing professionals from all over the country, will be held on May 25 to 26, 2005 at the Westin Philippine Plaza.

During his session, Polcarpio will also discuss traditional marketing philosophies that are no longer relevant, some of the deadly sins of marketing, and case studies from democratic as well as non-democratic countries.

The Conference will gather local and foreign experts like Policarpio who will discuss how marketers can respond to extreme marketing challenges by pushing their brands to the limits, going beyond market expectations and conquering the interests and purchasing powers of consumers.

For inquiries, please call the Philippine Marketing Association Secretariat at telephone numbers 634-4890, 634-5722, 636-1451 or email pma@philonline.com.

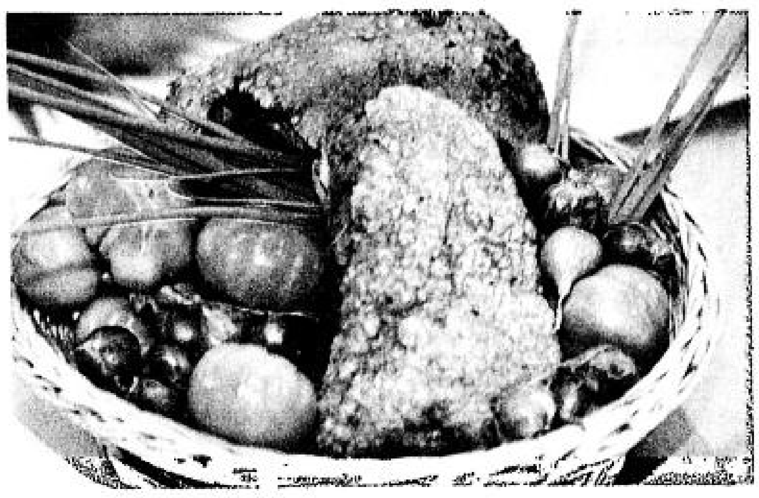
LifeStyle

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph
Text us your feedback:
inquirer life name/age/city/message to
2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ◉ TUESDAY **FITNESS** ◉ WEDNESDAY **2BU** ◉ THURSDAY **FOOD** ◉ FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

Automatic CENTRE
Summer Pleasures
May 9 to 20, 2005, Glorietta Activity Center



BAGNET

CALDERETANG kambing

Northern tastes

A foodfest at Century Park shows the romance of Ilocano cuisine

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

SQUASH and *bagoong na alamang* (shrimp paste) have no place in Ilocano-style *pinakbet*. Unlike the Tagalog version of the vegetable dish, the Ilocano variety makes use of patane, *bagoong na isda* (fish paste) and chunky pieces of *bagnet* (deep-fried and roasted pork) to jazz it up. *Kangkong* (swamp cabbage) is optional, as most Ilocanos prefer *saluyot*.

Regardless of such differences in cooking styles, Ilocanos and Tagalogs liberally use such vegetables as okra, eggplant, string beans and *ampalaya* (bitter gourd). Despite such similarities, however, Ilocanos prefer to use "baby" *ampalaya* and small, round eggplants to more conventional varieties preferred by Tagalogs and other ethnic groups.

Manila-based Ilocanos and non-Ilocanos alike can savor this version of *pinakbet* and other regional dishes from the Ilocos such as *calderetang kambing* (goat), chicken *adobo, pulpog, dinakdakan, diningding* and Ilocano *okoy* at the Century Park Hotel's Café in the Park. Billed as "Mangan Tayon," the Ilocano foodfest is ongoing until May 22.

"Diners can choose from close to 150 dishes," says Steve Nuguiat, Century Park's public relations manager. "Although 80 percent of the dishes during the food fest are from the Ilocos region, a wide selection of classic, old-time favorites is still available."

The hotel's latest food festival, which focuses on Ilocano food as whipped up by La Union-based chefs Gil Callejo, Michael Flores and Magdalena Aquino, is part of the Department of Tourism's National Heritage Month. Although they work for different restaurants, the three helped one another to whip up the best La Union has to offer.

So, aside from cooking *pinakbet* differently, what sets Ilocano cuisine apart from the way non-Ilocanos cook it? The chicken *adobo*, for one, is almost free of sauce and is garnished instead with whole green peppers. In lieu of commercial chickens, Callejo and his team use native, free-range chickens.

Tastier

"Native chickens are really tastier than the commercial variety," says Callejo. "Even their stock is more flavorful."

In lieu of bean sprouts (*togue*), Ilocano *okoy* is made up primarily of grated unriped papaya and small shrimps. Their calderetang kambing is a bit sweet because, aside from tomato sauce, grated cheese and potatoes, Ilocanos garnish the dish with pineapple tidbits.

Pulpog is the Ilocano version of barbecue. Instead of plain vinegar, however, the dish goes best with cooked pig's blood flavored with salt, vinegar and pepper. Ilocanos also have their version of *sisig* called *dinakdakan* (the first layer of a pig's face). Boiled pig's brains are added to diced and sautéed pork to add texture and flavor to the dish.

Speaking of pork, Callejo and his colleagues brought with them several kilos of bagnet and plenty of spices, which they hope would last until the last day of the week-long food fest. Of course, they could have cooked *bagnet* in Manila, but the team

NORTHERN/C2

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS
Catch
the Prince of Pop
as he dishes out songs
from his latest album
from Star Records.
Erik Santos
a world to discover
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CHICKEN adobo

Northern tastes

From page C1

isn't taking any chances since it may not have enough time and space to prepare the dish properly. Least you get the wrong ideas, preparing *bagnet* isn't as simple as cooking *lechon kawali*.

"We boil a large piece of pork first until it's half cooked," explains Flores. "Before frying it, we place the pork under the sun for an entire day to allow the skin to pop."

Gov. Victor Ortega of La Union and his wife, Mayor Mary Ann Ortega of San Fernando, together with several DOT officials, graced the launch at the lobby of Century Park. Garbed in native costumes, members of the San Fernando Millennium Choir opened the festivities by singing a series of Ilocano love songs.

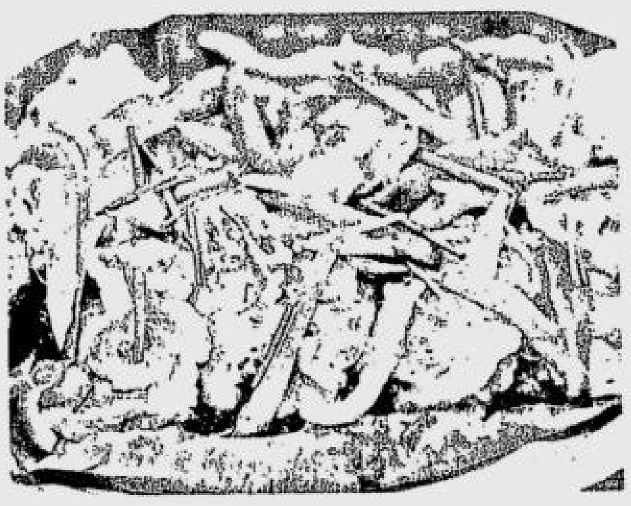
Apart from featuring particular dishes in their coffee shops, participating hotels like the Century Park has set an area in the lobby to feature items from La Union such as handicrafts, delicacies and various home-grown spirits like *tapuy* (rice wine) and *basi* (sugar cane wine). "Mangan Tayon" (let's eat) has never sounded so inviting.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

ILOCANO chefs Michael Flores, Magdalena Aquino and Gil Callejo

GUESTS during "Mangan Tayon" launch, from left: Allan Rothman of the World Bank; Paul Gill, GM of Century Park Hotel; Rey Chua, director of the Department of Tourism; Gov. Victor Ortega of La Union and Mayor Mary Jane Ortega of San Fernando, La Union

PINAKBET without squash



OKOY, La Union-style

THE SAN Fernando Millennium Choir

High-rise haute cuisine

From page C4

1 ½ tsp Dijon mustard
1 ½ tsp green onions
½ c vegetable oil
Emulsify mixture to make dressing.

To finish, slice cheesecake, top with pears. Arrange Mesclun with shiitake mushrooms. Dribble with dressing.

Steamed Chilean Sea Bass with Caviar

1 Chilean sea bass
Salt and pepper
Steam fish until done.

1 large potato, sliced thin, cooked in olive oil

Condiments:
3 c mayonnaise
4 eggs, boiled
1 c onions, finely chopped
1 c green onions
Caviar
2 lemons, wedged

To assemble, on a serving platter, spread mayonnaise on fish. Lay potatoes over fish. Arrange condiments.

Whole Roasted Hanging Tender with Walnut Horseradish Cream, Tomato Jam and Wine Gravy Roasted Vegetables

Hanging tender
Garlic cloves
Salt
Fresh thyme
Fresh pepper

STEAMED Chilean Sea Bass with Caviar

Rub on beef, roast.

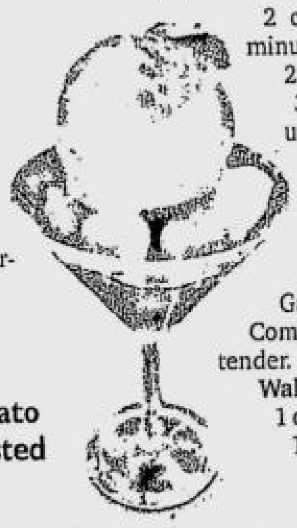
Vegetables:
½ k marble potatoes, steamed for 3 minutes
2 carrots, cubed, steamed for 3 minutes
2 zucchinis, cubed
3 corn cobs, steamed for 3 minutes
3 sweet potatoes, cubed, steamed for 3 minutes
½ kilo squash, cubed, steamed for 3 minutes
Butter
Garlic cloves, whole

Combine and bake until hanger is tender.

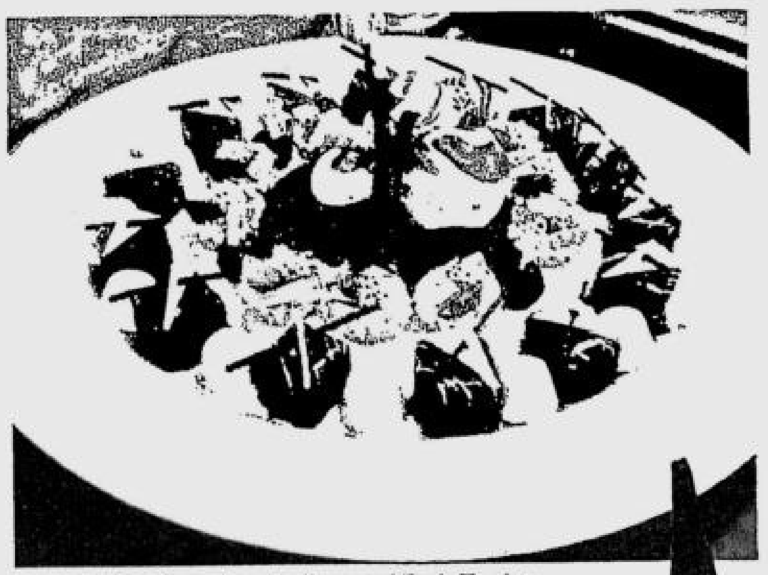
Walnut Horseradish Cream:
1 c cream
1 tbsp horseradish
Pinch sugar
½ c walnut
½ tsp lemon juice
Salt and pepper
Emulsify.

Gravy:
1 tbsp onion powder
1 tbsp garlic powder
½ tbsp broth powder
½ c water
1 c condensed beef stock
1 tbsp brown sauce
1 c button mushrooms, sliced
Thyme
Salt and pepper to taste
Combine in a saucepan. Season to taste.

Tomato Jam:
2 c tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1/3 c sugar
Salt and pepper
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
Combine in a saucepan. Blend.



SUMMER Fruit Salad in Orange Liquor, topped with Pomelo Sorbet and Mint



ASSORTED Chocolate Pralines and Fruit Tartlets

Paella Con Pichon (with Pigeon)

1/3 c olive oil
3 pigeons, quartered
2 tbsp garlic
¼ c parsley
1 c onions
1 canned tomato
Saffron, generous pinch
4 green bell peppers
1/3 c garlic
1 c smoked bacon
2 c paella rice
5 c stock
Pimiento
Combine in *paellera* until cooked.
Garnish with pimiento.

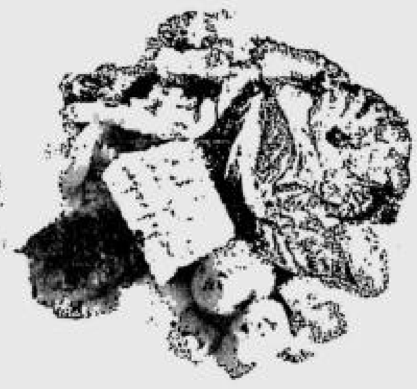
Summer Fruit Salad in Orange Liquor topped with Pomelo Sorbet and Mint

6 c mixed fruits (mangoes, kiwi, melon, watermelon, apples, honeydew, pears, strawberries)
¾ c sugar
1 c mint leaves
½ c orange liquor

Mix ingredients and allow to macerate. Chill. Transfer to martini glasses, top with pomelo sorbet, garnish with mint.

Pomelo Sorbet:
1 1/3 c water
1 1/3 c sugar
2 c *pomelo* puree
Pink food color or grenadine

Combine water and sugar in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer. Allow the syrup to cool, then chill for at least an hour. Combine the syrup with juice and food color or grenadine. Adjust to taste and adjust color. Churn using ice cream machine.



WHOLE Roasted Hanging Tender with Horseradish Cream and Wine Gravy Roasted Vegetables

FRUIT Tartlets and Chocolate Pralines with Dark Choco Tower and White Choco Balls

KINSUN Ng, group controller; Susan Yu, director of sales; Tomas Zita Jr., president and chair, Shang Grand Tower corp.; Aspiras; and Vince Formoso, vice president and chief financial officer

DOH-ing things so slowly

THE CONSUMER
Marietta Velasco Giron

WE THOUGHT that the move of the Department of Health to centralize all legal concerns would facilitate action on complaints of consumers about processed food.

We discovered how wrong we were when we called the legal office to ask about the status of a complaint filed by INQUIRER reader Isidro Mahinay about the unidentified object he found inside a pack of pork and beans.

A spokesperson of the office explained that complainants who wanted to take legal action against the manufacturer or distributor of a bad food product had first to ask the DOH legal section (tel. 7438301 local 2260) for advice on what to do.

Before, complaints about food and drugs were handled directly by the legal office of the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD), an agency of the DOH.

In the case of Mahinay, he was instructed by lawyer Ronald R. de Veyra of DOH legal services division to submit the food products to the BFAD for laboratory analysis.

Mahinay filed a formal application for analysis last April 26 with a letter of endorsement from the DOH legal department. He also submitted one unopened pouch of pork and beans, and the contaminated pack which he had kept in a freezer.

Upon receipt of a copy of Mahinay's letter, we called the DOH legal office to ask about the status of the complaint. We were told that it was assigned docket case number CNCR 05081. But the case was still pending by the time of this writing because, according to the spokesperson, "there was no arbitration lawyer available to handle the conciliation process between the manufacturer and Mahinay."

The spokesperson said there were only about eight or nine arbitration officers assigned to the National Capital Region, and they also handled cases in Regions 4 and 6.

"We have a backlog of cases to be resolved dating back to 1985," the spokesperson added.

We hope Mahinay's last remark in his letter to the BFAD would move them to speedy action, if only out of compassion. He wrote that it was fortunate he discovered the foreign element before giving the food to his son, a special child.

"He could not have complained, as he could not talk. Pork and beans is his favorite food," Mahinay added.

Disauthorized by Dow

After five years of being served by a termite control operator authorized by Dow AgriSciences company, journalists Vic and Lorna Tirol realized the work of the technicians had gone from bad to worse.

The couple chose the company because it did not use chemicals in eliminating termites. Instead of boring holes in walls and spraying with chemicals, technicians established ground stations around the house that were regularly monitored.

Sometime last year, however, the service "left much to be desired" (Tirol's words). It came to a point when the Tirols had to ask the company to terminate the service. "The termites were proliferating rapidly," they complained.

It was only when they complained to Dow that they discovered that the company, Sanitech, was no longer an authorized service provider of Dow. The couple asked for a refund of the remaining unserviced months, citing a provision in the contract that stated the service company would "refund to the customer an amount equal to the pre-paid services not yet received."

We called Dow and spoke to Gladez Ilao-Talavera who confirmed that Sanitech indeed "had been 'disauthorized' by Dow." Unfortunately, she said, Dow was in no position to refund the Tirol couple for the unserved portion of the contract with the operator. Dow could only offer, she explained, to assign one of its authorized operators to finish the service, at no cost.

Prompt action

I personally thank San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito's Task Force Disiplina for responding to my request to stop the intolerable noise from a "public videoke machine" positioned, for several days, right in the middle of our street.

Whoever taught of this noise machine for a business may be unaware of the law protecting residents from a public nuisance like this. The videoke machine is rented and customers pay P5 for every song they sing.

We recommend a ban on this public nuisance if operators cannot be obliged by local authorities to tone down the volume of the machines, stop their operation at night and prohibit use outside the house of customers.

By the way, San Juan residents with similar complaints can call the task force at 7251657. My personal praises for the prompt action of Sonny San Gregorio.

> The department's legal office admits their pile of cases to be resolved dates back to 1985

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Classic and gourmet 'kare-kare'

THE REGGIE Aspiras School Of Culinary Arts is offering the following classes:

May 20, Friday—Kare-kare from Traditional to Gourmet (all-new): classic Ox-tail Kare-kare with Mixed Vegetables, Crispy Pata with Vegetable Kare-kare, Salmon Belly with Shallot Jelly, Seafood, Lamb Shank with Chocolate Mint Bagoong, Kare-kare Paella, Infused Bagoongs, relishes and side dishes

May 21, Saturday—Easy Entertaining with Wellington: classic Beef Wellington with Three Sauces (Bernaise, Mushroom and Madeira), Pork Wellington with Applesauce and Caramelized Squash, Lamb Wellington, Chicken and Spinach Wellington, Delicious Seafood Wellington

May 23, Monday—Melt-in-your-mouth Ribs (all-new): Chinese-style, Lamb Teriyaki, Fried Honey Ribs, American Diner Style, Fruit-glazed Ribs, Garlic Ribs, Delicious Oriental Style, Baked with Soda Barbecue Sauce, salsas, side dishes and desserts, cooking secrets revealed

May 25, Wednesday—Roast Chicken 2005 (all-new): delicious and juicy Brine-cured Roast, Garlic and Herb Roast, French-style with Sea Salt, Roast Chicken Duck style with Plum and Chili Sauce, salad, side dishes, dessert.

Call 9289296, 9273008, 6335162, 6474744 and 0917-8399888.

CELEBRITY WAITERS Television personalities Geoff Eigenmann and Anne Curtis were the servers when The Pizza Company launched its first store in the Philippines at 2/L, main entrance of Market! Market! at The Fort, Taguig. Among the guests the two celebrities served were Efrain Pelaez Jr., president of Alpha 8 Food Holdings Corp., Philippine operator of the brand.

Advance cooking, baking classes

THE MAYA Kitchen is conducting four-day advance cooking courses May 24-27, Tuesday-Friday.

The certificate courses are suited to people at all cooking levels. At the end of the course, students who want to make a career in the food industry are given recommendations and the opportunity of working in a pastry shop, hotel, bakery and restaurant.

Meanwhile, Cooking II at 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. teaches some great recipes. It also includes Review of Basic Culinary Principles; Meal Management; Knowledge of Herbs, Spices and Condiments; Basic Maintenance and Preservation of Food (Proper Receiving, Storage and Preparation); Menu Planning, Kitchen Accounting and Recipe Formulation; Actual Workshop on International Cuisine; Ethnic Cooking, Hors d'oeuvre, Salads, Cooked/Cured/Prepared foods, Quick Desserts and Market Basket.

Participants get a free "Maya Kitchen's Mix & Match 3" cookbook.

Baking II at 2-5:30 p.m. will teach baking ingredients and their functions, baker's percentage/math, commercial methods used in preparing breads, pies, cakes, pastries, bakery products including costing and batching applicable to bakery operation.

Visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesday-Saturday) at 8/L, Liberty Bldg., A. Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road), Makati City. Call 8921185 or 8925011 local 108. E-mail mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph.

Cookbook for physical, spiritual health

LEARN how to be a beautiful cook inside and out through "Inner Beauty Cookbook" by Didi Nakar Marañon with chef Carina Nicolas.

The book may be your guide to pampering your palate while nourishing your spirit. It contains easy-to-prepare recipes—from soups and salads, to rice and pasta dishes, to entrees and desserts.

The Inner Beauty Cookbook will be launched during the Inner Beauty Conference on May 21 in Manila and May 28 in Cebu, which have healing for their theme.

The conference will feature helpful and insightful talks. It includes workshops on how to prepare healthy meals and how to unwind after a long day, as well as book sales and bazaar.

In Manila, the conference will be held at the Manila Elim Center for Renewal, 51 10th St., Rolling Hills Village, New Manila, Quezon City; and at SM Trade Hall, Cebu City.

Tickets cost P300 each.

Call Springs Foundation, Inc.-Manila at 7226749 and Cebu at 2344192. Visit www.innerbeautysecrets.com or www.elimglobal.org

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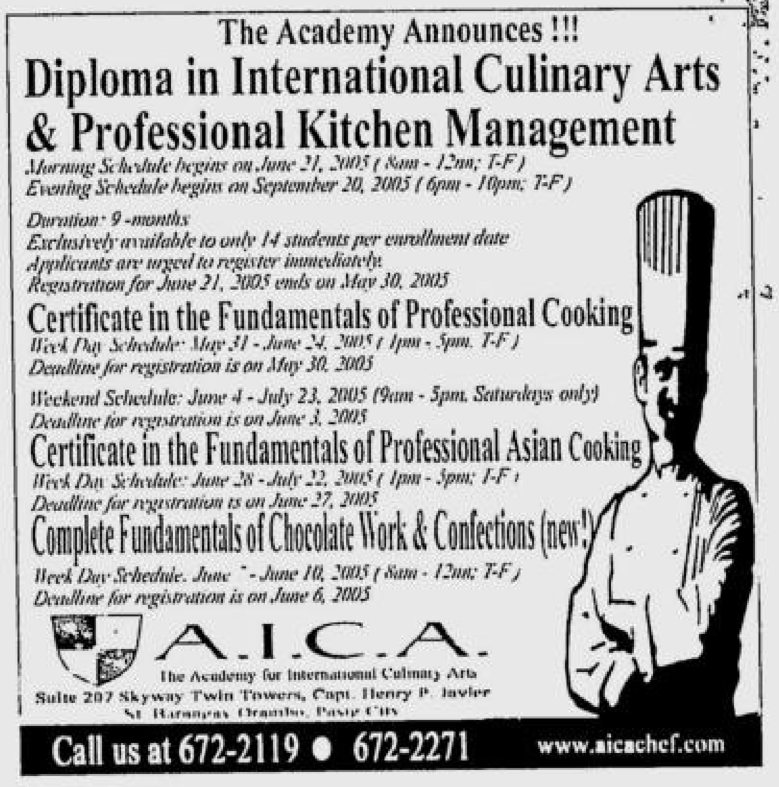
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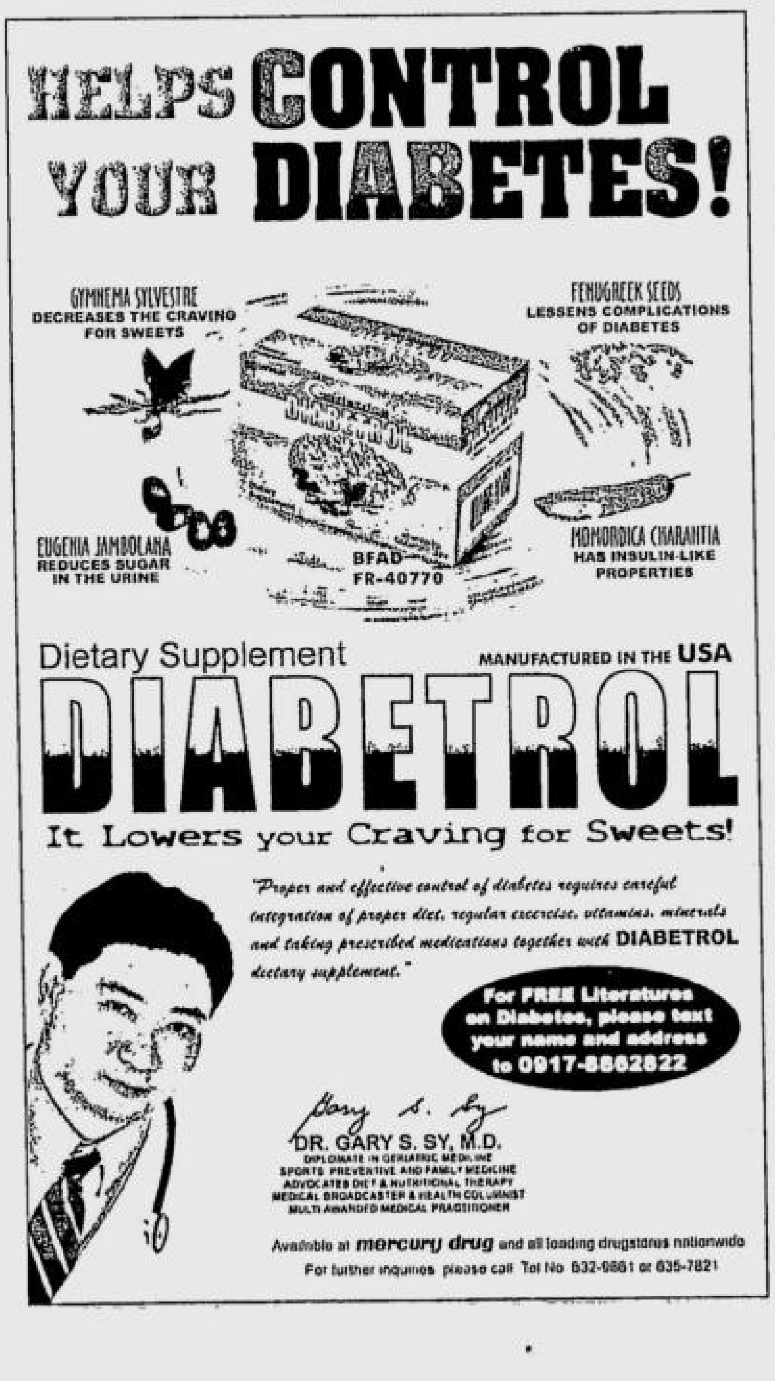
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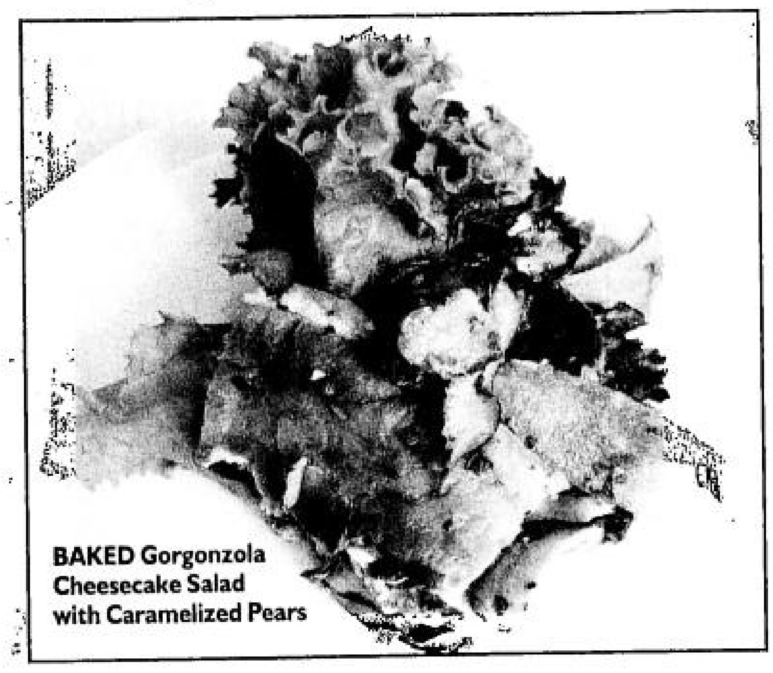


BAKED Gorgonzola Cheesecake Salad with Caramelized Pears

By Cesar Miguel G. Escaño
Contributor

THE SHANG Grand Tower recently treated members of the media to a sumptuous luncheon at the Fort Global City in Taguig.

"Condo Living, Condo Cooking" gave participants a glimpse (and a mouthful) of the Shang Grand Tower experience.

Celebrity chef and INQUIRER columnist Reggie Aspiras prepared the grand feast right in the kitchen of the three-bedroom model unit to demonstrate its versatility for fancy cooking. She was assisted by the team of Gene del Prado, executive sous chef of the Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

The Shang Grand Tower (tel. 8111819, visit www.theshanggrandtower.com) is located at the triangle corner of De la Rosa, Perea and Nieva Streets in Legazpi Village, Makati City. The 250-unit posh residential condominium is behind the Enterprise Center and is a few minutes away from the Glorietta and Greenbelt Malls.

> INQUIRER columnist chef Reggie Aspiras demonstrates versatility of condo kitchens

Foie Gras Skewers

1 *foie gras*, cubed
12 rosemary sprigs
Salt
Pepper

Skewer *foie gras* cubes on rosemary sprigs. Grill. Baste with Honey Soy Glaze.

Honey Soy Glaze:
1/2 c soy sauce
½ c *mirin* (sweet rice wine)
¼ c sugar

Bring ingredients to a boil until slightly thick. Baste mixture on to *foie gras*.

Pea and Mushroom Mixture:
¼ c butter
1 tbsp olive oil
3 c peas
2 c shiitake mushrooms
2 tbsp green onions
2 tsp sugar
½ tsp salt
½ tsp pepper

Saute ingredients in a sauce pan.

Caramelized Shallots:
3 c shallots, peeled and left whole
1 c water
1 c sugar
¼ c balsamic vinegar
1 tsp salt
1 tsp pepper
1 tbsp butter

Combine ingredients except butter in a saucepan. Simmer until thick. Take off heat, add butter.

To assemble, put pea and mushroom mixture on bottom of serving plate. Add caramelized shallots. Top with *foie gras* skewers.

Dribble with Honey Soy Glaze.

(Aspiras says the best place to get *foie gras* in Metro Manila is Santi's Deli.)

CHEF Reggie Aspiras basting *foie gras* skewers

Baked Gorgonzola Cheesecake Salad with Caramelized Pears, Mixed Mushrooms and Pear Vinaigrette Cheesecake

Crust:
¾ c toasted bread crumbs
¾ c toasted walnuts, finely chopped
3 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

Make crust.

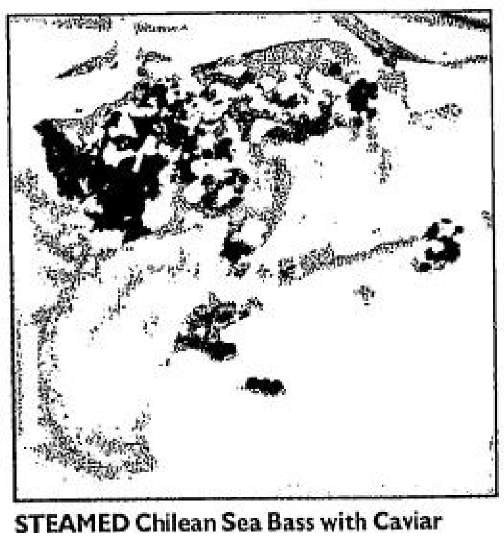
Filling:
200 g Gorgonzola cheese
2 packages cream cheese at room temperature
4 eggs
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tbsp fresh rosemary, minced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Combine. Pour on crust. Bake.

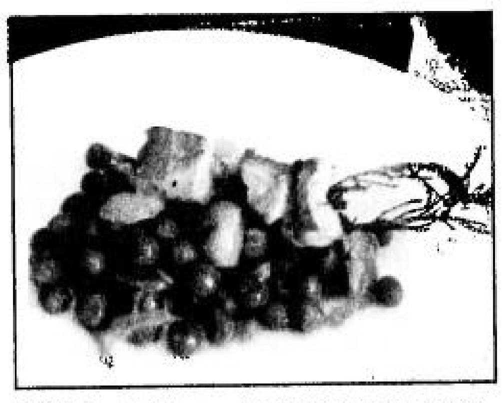
Mesclun:
2 c shiitake mushrooms, sauteed in olive oil and seasoned with salt and pepper
3 pears, roasted

Dressing:
1 c pear puree
¼ c white wine vinegar
2 tbsp shallots, minced
2 tbsp plus 1 tsp sugar
1 ½ tsp fresh rosemary, chopped
¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper

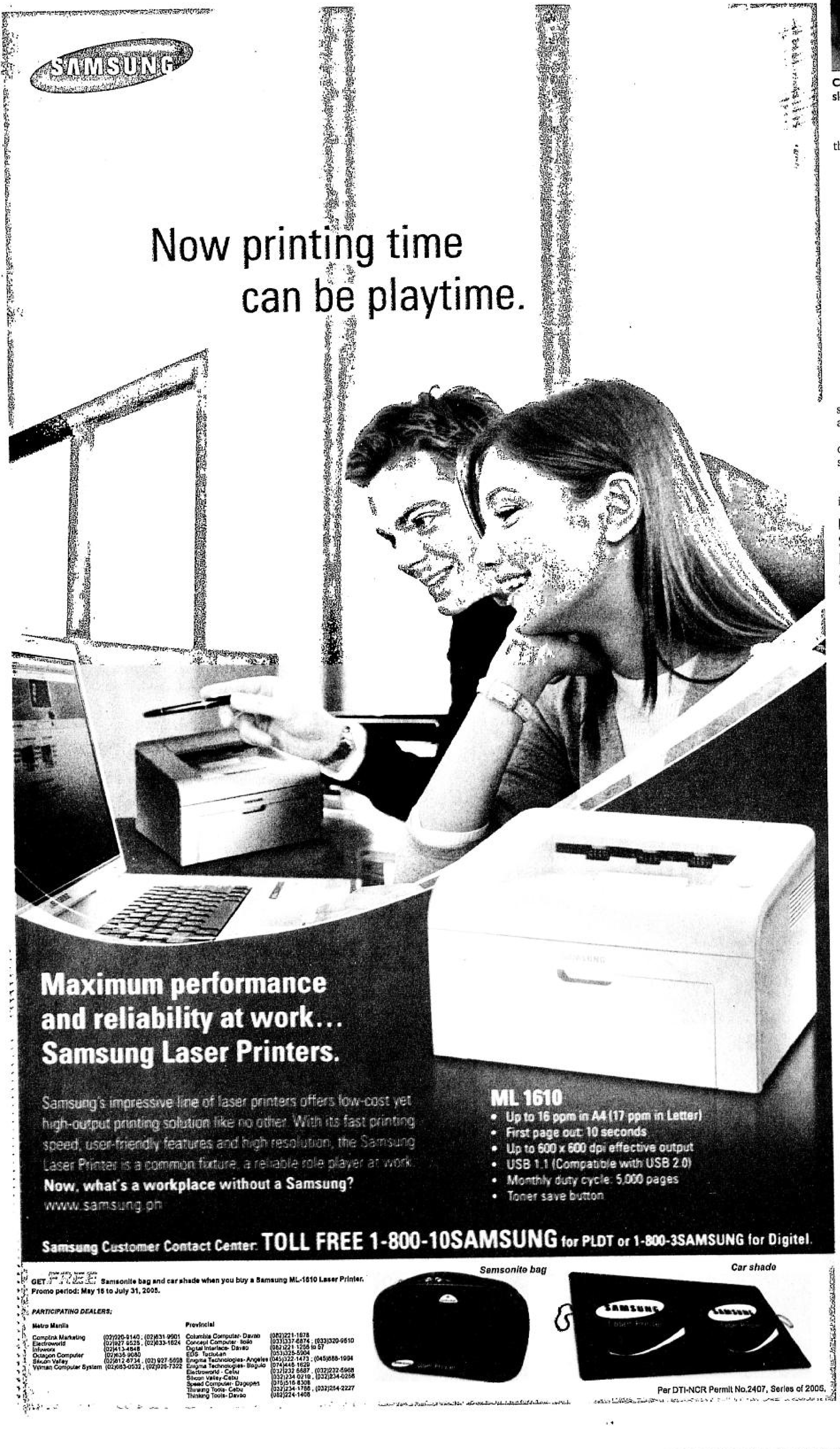
HIGH-RISE/C2



STEAMED Chilean Sea Bass with Caviar



FOIE Gras in Rosemary Skewers, Honey Soy Glaze, Green Peas and Shallot Chutney Peas



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Foodie's guide to Ilocos

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

WE ARE planning a trip to Ilocos. Please write about it—the culinary treats there, especially where we can eat *bagnet* and buy chorizo to take home.

BUGSY AND FRIENDS

Oh dear Bugsy, I am a true-blue Ilokana from La Union. Unfortunately, I haven't been to Ilocos, Sur or Norte, in ages. So I took the liberty of asking a good friend and a sworn foodie, Gov. Bong Marcos, to answer our questions and to give us a gustatory tour of his side of Ilocandia.

To find that perfect *bagnet* and chorizo, he urges you to take that trip to the market to sample and choose your personal "suki," as there are many good variations of these Ilokano specialties. Taste, after all, is both personal and relative.

On Ilocos... The best time to visit? Places of interest?

The best time to visit is around and after Christmas. It is a happy time for us as, besides being the holidays, many of our friends and relatives come home from abroad. Also, the weather is at its most pleasant. People think of Ilocos as hot but it is regularly below 20°C during that time of year.

There are many places to see. There are the ancient and beautiful churches. The one in Paoay is a World Heritage Site. There are kilometers of beaches. The most famous is in Pagudpud, which I would compare to Boracay. Ilocos has a casino, golf courses and places for water sports of every description.

And for the more ecotourism-minded visitor, the upland areas are for hiking, camping and rafting. There are waterfalls to bathe in and mountain areas higher and cooler than Baguio.

Now, on places to go to for *bagnet, longganiza, empanada*, authentic Ilokano cuisine and that excellent *lechon baka* he used to send my dad.

For me, the best *bagnet* —I might be partial since I'm from there—is the Batac *bagnet* (known as *pak-pak*). It is cooked slightly differently from the others giving it good flavor and texture.

There are so many versions of Ilocos *longganiza*. Sur and Norte have different versions with the Sur version being sweeter and Norte's being more *maasim*. Different households make their own versions. You can even ask your *suki* to make something special with, for example, less (or more!) fat, different seasonings or even different meats. One can find all these in the market and the standard version is always well represented.

I like my *empanada* piping hot so I always end up eating it right there at the stall of the nearest street vendor. The *empanada* is uniformly good but you can specify if it is with or without *longganiza* or egg, or extra this or that... I like it freshly cooked so the egg inside is still *malasado* giving a richness to the whole thing. My friends tell me it also freezes quite well.

The best authentic Ilocano cuisine is still in the homes of people but there are some small restaurants that serve very good Ilocano food. There is La Preciosa in Laoag and Dawang's in San Nicolas. The best pork chop I have ever tried comes from a restaurant in Currimao that has no official name but known locally as Lazo's. Just look for it beside the Shell station on the highway.

Palazzo Laoag serves some of the most innovative versions of traditional Ilocano food. Consult the locals as they keep quiet about these "secret" places so they don't get crowded out.

Lechon baka is a new development in Ilocos cuisine starting from about 20 years ago. They tell me the secret is in the method of tenderizing the meat but they keep their own methods and recipes secret. The most famous comes from Eleanor's and it is still the premium "brand." Still, there are others trying to compete who also have their different secret recipes.

Contact numbers - Eleanor's Lechon Baka, 7716442; Palazzo de Laoag, 7731842; La Preciosa, 7731162

Best place for pasalubong?

All these goodies can, of course, be had from the market but for one-stop shopping go to the Museo Ilocos Norte in Laoag where these are already packaged to take home. There is also the *Dap-Ayan ti Ilocos Norte* across the road from the Museo where you can sample all these and also buy other non-food *pasalubong*.

GOV. BONG Marcos

BAGNET

Visit the market to sample different versions of *bagnet* and chorizo

Let's talk about your dad and food...

My Dad was a very healthy eater so *pinakbet* and other veggie dishes were always on our table. Still, I think his all-time favorite had to be *diningding*. He was also very partial to *gammet* (nori dried in sheets) either fried or in a soup. Then there is *pokpoklo*, a seaweed that's eaten in a salad with KBL (*kalamansi, bagoong, lasona* or shallot).

Next week, more of this interview, plus Bong and I whip up an Ilokano feast and share our favorite recipes of *pinakbet, bagnet* and other GI (genuine Ilocano) classics you've long been requesting.

Finally, some space! The last instalment of Spanish cooking terms:

Solomillo - fillet of beef, pork or lamb
Tapa-s - little dishes, appetizers
Tortilla - omelet
Turron - hard nougat with nuts
Vapor - steam
Verduras - vegetables
Zarzuela - fish stew

I'm roasting chicken and grilling ribs, among other things. See you in class! Call 9289296

For comments or suggestions, text 0917-8399888.

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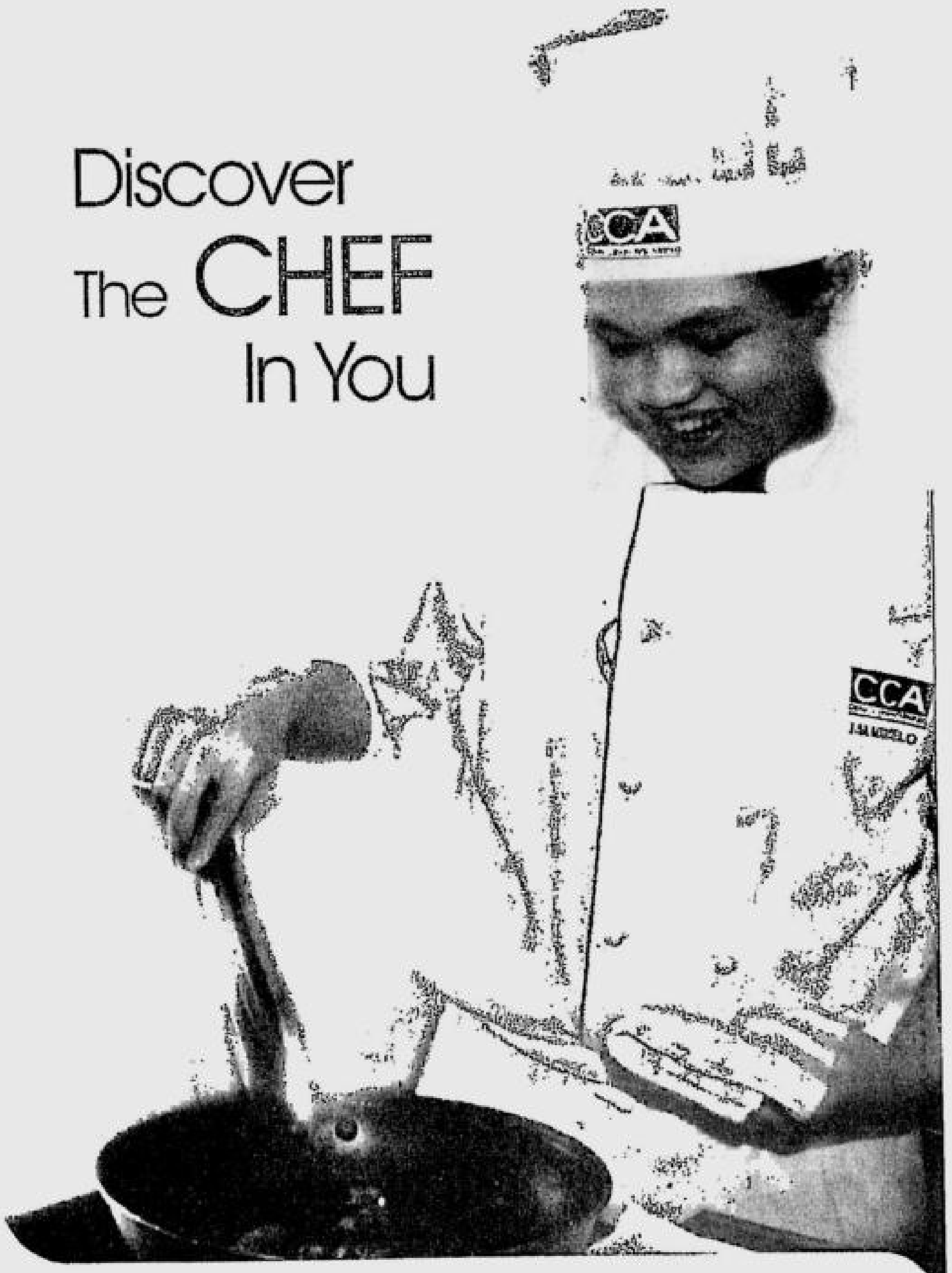


The Center for Culinary Arts (CCA), Manila is the country's leading and longest running culinary school, having reaped numerous awards including Superbrands 2004 & 2005. This May, the school will hold the **Discovery Course**, an introductory program to its full-time courses:

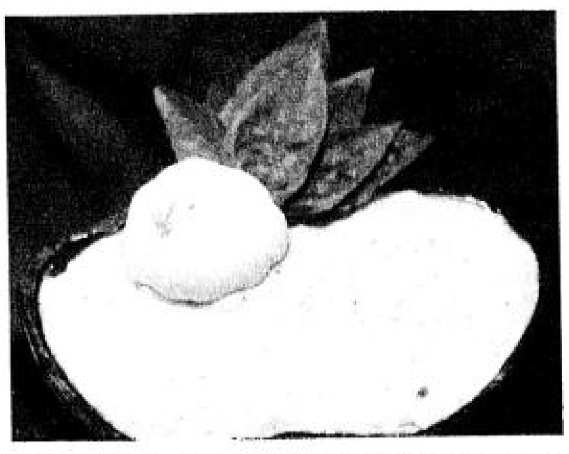
- Diploma in Culinary Arts and Management
- Diploma in Baking-Pastry Arts and Management

You will get a complete overview including hands-on learning sessions. If you see yourself in this career, you may take one of these full-time courses with our experienced faculty and finish with a Government Accredited Diploma. You may even pursue a Bachelor Degree overseas with our partner schools in Canada and Australia. You will also get a US National Restaurant Association ProMgt® Certification, an advantage for work in the USA. Try out a future in culinary arts. Sign up for the Discovery Course at CCA, Manila.

287 Katipunan Avenue, Loyola Heights,
Quezon City, Philippines
T : (632) 4264840 - 41 F : (632) 4264836
E : marketing@cca-manila.com
www.cca-manila.com

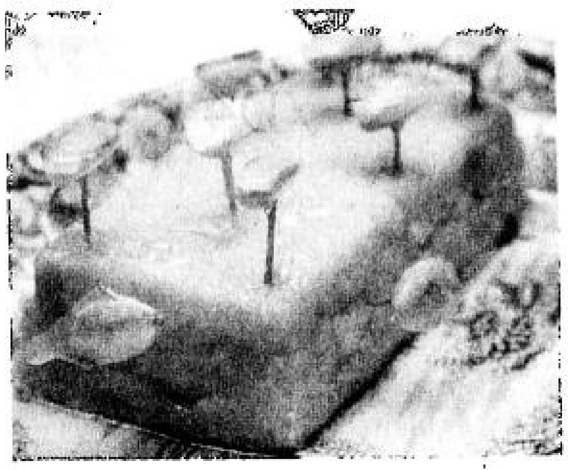
CCA
Center for Culinary Arts, Manila

LADY'S Choice Lucban Mayo Dip has Lucban longganisa, garlic, onion, all-purpose cream and mayonnaise.



LADY'S Choice Mayo with Carabao's Milk, a blend of *kesong puti*, basil, fine nuts, garlic, olives oil and mayonnaise

PAELLA Valenciana has prawns, chicken and pork.



TITA Moning's bread pudding

Truly, madly, deeply dips

Lady's Choice shows mayo is more than just bread spread or dressing

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Ryan Lim

THE MAYO-BASED dips are perfect for the appetizer sampler of Dahon ng Kangkong, Native Talong and Kalabasa Tempura, Crispy Salt and Pepper Tawilis and Chorizo Croquettas.

LADY'S Choice senior brand manager Alex Dan Tacderas with chef Suzette Montinola of La Cocina de Tita Moning and Unilever's Mark de Joya

TAKE a dip!

Yes, a sampler of various mayonnaise-based dips was the highlight of a recent culinary feast organized by one of the country's trusted names in kitchen condiments, Lady's Choice. The festival was aptly held at the historic ancestral home of the Legardas, La Cocina de Tita Moning compound in Malacañang, Manila

"Lady's Choice mayonnaise has been with us for five generations now," said Alex Dan N. Tacderas, Unilever Foods Philippines' group product manager. "We have trusted it through generations for making our salads sumptuous, our sandwiches great, our steamed fish delicious."

But mayonnaise is more than just a perfect partner for salads and sandwiches. Lady's Choice demonstrated its versatility by concocting ingenious dips, blended with local flavors and presented in jigger glasses for easy sampling.

Lady's Choice Mayo with Carabao's Milk was a combination of *kesong puti*, fine nuts, garlic and olive oil. Lady's Choice Lucban Mayo Dip was a mix of mayonnaise, Lucban *longganisa*, garlic, onion and all-purpose cream. Lady's Choice Guava Infused Aioli consisted of mayonnaise, fresh guava jam, garlic and onion. And Lady's Choice Smoked Bangus Dip was a blend of smoked bangus flakes and all-purpose cream.

An appetizer sampler of Dahon ng Kangkong, Native Talong and Kalabas Tempura, Crispy Salt and Pepper Tawilis, Chorizo Croquettas, and Fried Lumpia Ubod perfectly complemented the mayo-based dips.

"No matter how ordinary the food, we want to tell people that Lady's Choice is here to help them make it extraordinary," said Tacderas. "A *piniritong galunggong* will definitely go a long way with a Lady's Choice Mayonnaise Friedelicious Dip. A *tortang talong* will taste like an Italian zucchini with the help of Lady's Choice Mayonnaise. Fried Pork Chops will become a mouthwatering fiesta fare when dipped with Lady's Choice Mayonnaise. And why not try adding Davao Suha pulp or Cebu Mango Bits or Balayan Bagoong or Dagupan Bangus Flakes to our Lady's Choice Mayonnaise and see the wonders it will do to a boring potato chips or to a fried *lumpia*?"

Food trip

The food event was part of Lady's Choice new "Food Trip" program, which will visit major fiestas around the archipelago together with the Department of Tourism's "Biyahe Na!" program.

Fiesta revelers and residents of each town visited will be treated to various ways Lady's Choice Mayonnaise can complement the region's signature dishes. New and delightful taste discoveries have emerged with Lady's Choice being paired off with indigenous delicacies of each province.

"Lady's Choice thought it is but fitting to remind Filipinos that we were and still are the happiest people on earth. We want our people to rekindle the happy moments when we had fiestas to commemorate and give thanks to a happy year. These are occasions when the whole family and clan got together and the queen of the house preparing the most sumptuous meals most of them prepared with a huge bottle of Lady's Choice and filled both our tummies and hearts with food, laughter and happiness," says Tacderas.

"We want our Filipino home to always have that festive mood every day. We want to help make Filipino homemakers genuinely creative in the way they will provide food for their families," he added.

The Lady's Choice Food Trip program has been to Cebu, Davao, Dagupan and will be visiting the fiestas in other parts of the country. In June, it will be at the Parada ng Lechon, Balayan, Batangas.

After the taste-testing of mayo dips, chef Suzette Montinola of Tita Moning restaurant presented the house signature dishes, including the Lengua, which is cooked with white wine for five hours, Paella Valenciana heaving with prawns, *chorizo* and pork, and Whole Baked Lapu-Lapu with Olive oil and Garlic. Sweet finales were Bread Pudding and Caramelized Saba Banana with Vermouth.

LADY'S Choice celebrates Filipinos' love affair with food.

Experience authentic Vietnamese cuisine

ASIA Society Philippines and the Embassy of Australia feature an eight-course degustation menu of Vietnamese/Australian chef, Luke Nguyen tonight at 7 at Top of the Citi, Citibank Tower, Paseo de Roxas Avenue, Makati. This fundraising dinner will benefit Asia Society's upcoming arts and culture programs. Call 7524374/8108983.

DINING OUT

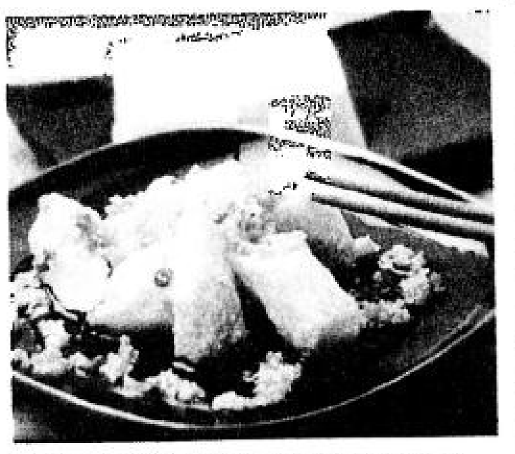
MANILA Pavilion Hotel presents the Best of Beef and Burgundy until May 28 at The Rotisserie. The menu includes Kansas Beef Soup, Sloppy Cow, Caesar's Beef, Chateaubriand, Medallion of Beef Tenderloin, Rib-Eye Steak, Cowboy Striploin Steak, Butterfly Striploin Steak, Beef Strips and New York Sirloin Steak. Call 5261212.

EDSA Shangri-La's Lobby Lounge offers premium coffee and authentic biscotti until May 31. Call 6338888.

DUSIT Hotel Nikko's Fiesta San Miguel features Grilla Mania until May 31. This eat-all-you-can promo offers grilled seafood and meat specialties. Dusit Fiesta is the featured drink for May. Meanwhile, the Thien Duong Vietnamese Restaurant offers Executive Express set menus. Call 8673333.

TGI FRIDAY'S introduces breakfast items such as Breakfast Slammer, Stuffed French Toast, Plain, Banana or Apple Pancakes, Beef Tapa, Continental Breakfast and Fruit Platter. The restaurant is located at the ground floor of Robinsons Place Manila. Call 5265334.

SUPER Bowl of China features Super Cool Desserts like Halo-Halo, Banana Split, Pineapple and Peach Split, Kit Kat Choco Attack Parfaits, Simply Strawberry Parfaits, Strawberry, Chocolate and Decadent Sundaes. Super Bowl of China is located at Megastrip of Megamall; Jupiter St., Makati; Glorietta 4, Ayala Center; Chefs Avenue, festival Mall, Alabang; SM City North Edsa; Eastwood City Walk 2, Libis; SM City, Fairview; The Promenade, Greenhills; and Gateway Mall, Cubao.



DIMSUM n' Dumplings offers Pork Siomai, Honey Ham Dumpling, Crab and Corn Dumpling, Spinach Dumpling, Salmon Tofu, Hakaw, Chili Crab Dumpling and Crabstick Roll with Seaweed.

THE SULO Hotel's Cafe Paraiso offers more than 50 selections of your favorite classic Sulo cuisine. These include cold cuts, appetizers, soups, salads, main courses, pastries, native cakes and desserts. Pamper your cravings with Apple Walnut Cake, the hotel's Cake of the Month for May. Available at the Patisserie. Call 9245051 to 71.

EDSA Shangri-La's Garden Cafe presents Seafood Night every Friday and Saturday, 6:30-10 p.m. Featured are giant barbecue skewers with prawns, tuna and salmon grilled a la minute, Asian and Continental hot entrees, fresh oysters, sushi, sashimi and seafood salad. Call 6347373/6338888.

THE LJC Group's Cafe Havana presents Gambas Fiesta. Cafe Havana is located at Remedios Circle, Malate, Manila. Call 5218097. Coffee Frost Express is featured at Café Adriatico outlets in Remedios Circle, Malate; Getway Mall, Cubao; Westgate Center, Alabang; and Eastwood, Libis. Call 5222593/ 5220403.

TACO BELL serves tacos, burritos, quesadillas and nachos. Taco Bell is located at Gateway Mall, Araneta Čenter, Cubao, QC.

Reliving the Pinoy chocolate days of old

WITH two branches at SM Makati and SM Manila, and a third one at Walter Mart Makati, Tsoko.nut Batirol provides well-loved Pinoy dishes with a twist. It is Pinoy charm all the way.

The charming portrait on Tsoko.nut Batirol's wall (owner Marian Romano's mother) -- of a smiling lola whipping up the smooth creamy concoction of cacao and condensada with a hand-spun *batidor*—reminds who we really are—our past, our heritage. It reminds us of the "tsokolate" days of our childhood.

Tsoko.nut Batirol is a a mishmash of our rich history.

The menu says it all: *dinuguan* with *puto* or rice, *relyenong bangus*, Pinoy pork steak, chicken roll, *chorizong hubad* and *callos* as main entrée; *suman sa mangga*, spicy *dulong* with *biscocho*, spaghetti *alegui*, spaghetti *jardenera* and *palabok*. And for dessert, coffee cake with sweet crumble, ube cake, chocolate cake and *pandan macapuno*.

Everything comes from a central commissary and kitchen where all entrees pass through rigid supervision.

"By centralizing the procurement of the freshest ingredients, as well as the preparation of all the menu items, then we can assure our patrons that they will always get their money's worth," Marian said.

Angel Noriega, store manager, said more branches are planned.

"We are positioning our store as a Pinoy style Starbucks where the young and not-so-young can converge in the middle of or after a hectic day to enjoy food and company," Noriega said.

Indeed, nothing like the tsokolate batirol (plain, with peanuts and cashew nuts, with or without sugar) to temper the dazzling days and dark nights of the soul.

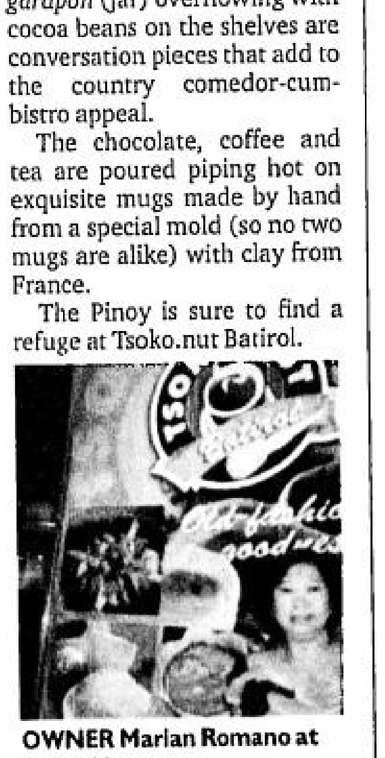
The tableau for the *tsokolate* comes from Leyte, where the cacao trees flourish. The coffee (barako, Baguio blend, cappuccino, latte, tisoy) and tea are available for those who need a caffeine kick.

The simple but elegant store interiors dominated by vibrant orange and down-to-earth ecru exude a homey ambiance.

The drum-like drop lights and minimalist wall treatments add to the safe sanctuary ambiance. The bric-a-brac (the vintage cast iron batirol with wooden handle) and glass *garapon* (jar) overflowing with cocoa beans on the shelves are conversation pieces that add to the country comedor-cum-bistro appeal.

The chocolate, coffee and tea are poured piping hot on exquisite mugs made by hand from a special mold (so no two mugs are alike) with clay from France.

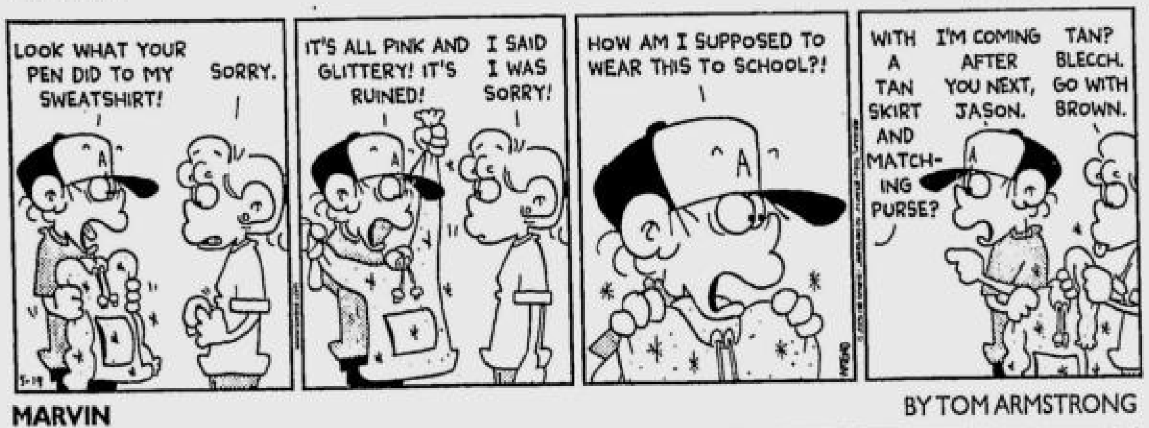
The Pinoy is sure to find a refuge at Tsoko.nut Batirol.



OWNER Marian Romano at Tsoko.Nut entrance

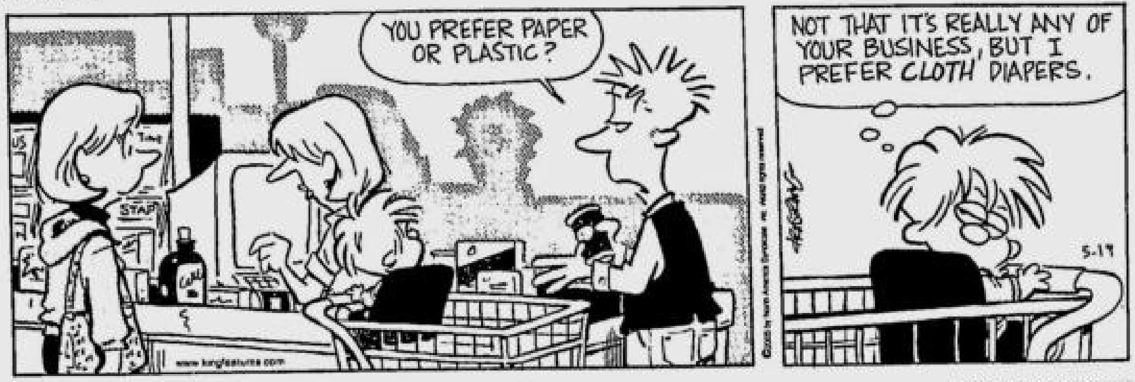
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


LOOK WHAT YOUR PEN DID TO MY SWEATSHIRT!
SORRY.
IT'S ALL PINK AND GLITTERY! IT'S RUINED!
I SAID I WAS SORRY!
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO WEAR THIS TO SCHOOL?!
WITH A TAN SKIRT AND MATCHING PURSE?
I'M COMING AFTER YOU NEXT, JASON.
TAN? BLECCH. GO WITH BROWN.
5-19

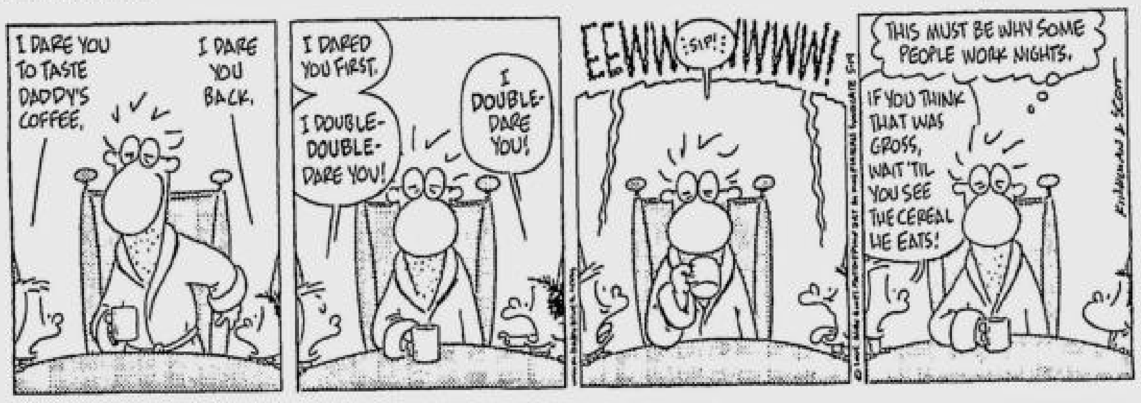
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


YOU PREFER PAPER OR PLASTIC?
NOT THAT IT'S REALLY ANY OF YOUR BUSINESS, BUT I PREFER CLOTH DIAPERS.
5-19

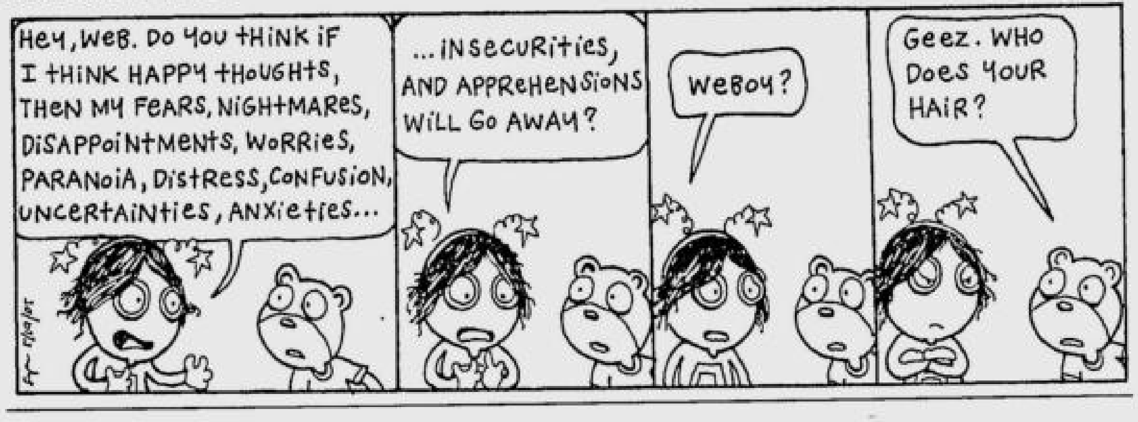
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I DARE YOU TO TASTE DADDY'S COFFEE.
I DARE YOU BACK.
I DARED YOU FIRST.
I DOUBLE-DOUBLE-DARE YOU!
I DOUBLE-DARE YOU!
EEWW
SIP!
WWW!
THIS MUST BE WHY SOME PEOPLE WORK NIGHTS.
IF YOU THINK THAT WAS GROSS, WAIT 'TIL YOU SEE THE CEREAL HE EATS!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, WeB. Do You tHiNK iF I tHiNK HAPPY tHouGHtS, THeN MY FeARS, NiGHtMARes, DiSAPPoiNtMeNtS, WoRRieS, PARANoiA, DistReSS, CoNFUSioN, UNCeRtAiNties, ANXieties...
...INSeCURities, AND APPReHeNSioNS WiLL Go AWAY?
WeBoY?
Geez. WHO Does YouR HAiR?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're energetic! Many of you use this energy to lead the activities of others. You will teach yourself whatever you're interested in. Invariably, you communicate what you learn to others. You have a natural charisma that attracts people to you. Justice is important to you. The year ahead is social and favorable to relationships.
Birthdate of: Kevin Garnett, basketball player; Malcolm X, activist; Grace Jones, model/actress/singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a good day for business transactions or shopping. It's also a good day to introduce new ideas at your job. (You have a lot of mental energy.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): If you want others to join you in any kind of activity today, you'll be able to persuade them to do so! You're very convincing right now.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today your ruler, Mercury, is approaching fiery Mars. This gives you enormous energy. You know what you want, and you're going to go after it! (Good luck.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): If you have any concerns connected with education, travel, dealing with foreign countries or medical matters, this is the day to push your agenda. You're extremely convincing because you believe in what you're saying.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is an excellent day to talk to the boss. Tomorrow is a pretty good day as well. (But today is better.) Put your cards on the table and see what happens.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Give yourself the pleasure of something new and adventurous. Try to go someplace you've never been before. Do something different!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You will easily research anything and discover answers to questions today. You have the drive and energy to go after what you want. Nothing is too much trouble.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a good day for parents to discuss raising children. It's also a good day to talk to partners about vacations and creative ventures. Entertainment and show business will flourish.

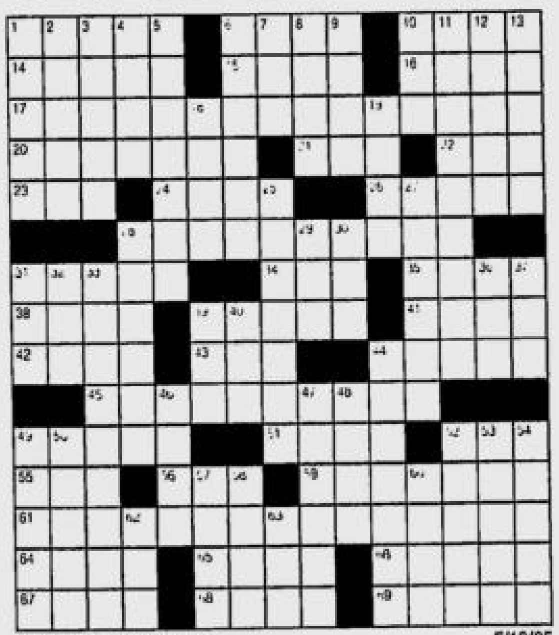
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You want to do something in practical terms today to make where you work function better. You want it to be more efficient and more productive, as well as safe and comfortable.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This can be a lovely, playful day! It's also a good day for artistic adventures, working with children and anything to do with theme parks or the hospitality industry.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Family discussions can achieve a lot today. They will be lively and energetic, but they will also be productive and focused.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): If you are in sales, or if you market, teach, write or communicate, this is your day! You feel mentally alive. Your mind is crisp, bright and attentive.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

ACROSS
1 Nursery rhyme ender
6 Sailor's mop
10 Sibilant signal
14 Insect stage
15 Silver or soft ending
16 Persistent pain
17 Start of Stephen Laberge quote
20 Changed for the better
21 Writer Grafton
22 Food fragment
23 Sibilant sound
24 Concert halls
26 Georgia university
28 Part 2 of quote
31 Oak, in a nutshell
34 One of the Tweedles
35 Web location
38 Small town
39 Part 3 of quote
41 State of irritation
42 Mary Baker ___
43 Offbeat
44 Painter of ballet dancers
45 Part 4 of quote
49 Au revoir
51 LePew of cartoons
52 King lead-in
55 D.C. legislator
56 Tatami
59 Language similar to Provencal
61 End of quote
64 To be in Toulon
65 Indigo dye
66 Spoons
67 To-do list item
68 Cincinnati nine
69 Like Gatsby

DOWN
1 Robert and Alan
2 Granges
3 Acacia and baobab
4 Novelist Connell
5 Hammer in
6 Nation on the Baltic Sea
7 Existed
8 War god
9 Actor Bridges
10 Pol's provider
11 Education
12 Gather, as cloth
13 Irritable
18 Make over
19 Coral formation
25 Made sense
27 Rumples
28 Sock with diamonds
29 Sushi bar offering
30 Carpet color
31 Vigoda or Burrows
32 Cow's chew
33 Conferers of holy orders
36 Barcelona aunt
37 UFO crew
39 Eddie of vaudeville
40 Vow in a chapel
44 Watching calories
46 Sugar cube
47 Decorative stickers
48 October stone
49 Plus item
50 Mouth of Mississippi
52 Wonderland visitor
53 Sri ___
54 Uneasy feeling
57 Some distance
58 Sound quality
60 Declare
62 Comic squeal
63 Disencumber

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

S	N	A	F	U	■	D	E	F	T	■	C	O	R	K
O	R	G	A	N	■	E	D	E	R	■	O	R	E	O
C	A	R	L	S	B	A	D	T	A	V	E	R	N	S
■	■	■	S	E	I	■	A	I	D	E	■	■	■	■
S	T	R	E	A	K	S	■	D	E	N	O	T	E	D
S	H	E	■	T	I	N	A	■	S	E	N	O	R	A
S	E	T	S	■	N	A	S	H	■	T	I	N	O	S
■	H	O	T	A	I	R	S	A	L	O	O	N	S	■
M	O	T	O	R	■	L	E	D	A	■	N	A	I	L
N	U	A	N	C	E	■	T	E	C	H	■	G	O	T
O	R	L	E	A	N	S	■	S	T	I	P	E	N	D
■	■	■	■	R	E	A	R	■	I	D	A	■	■	■
B	A	R	F	O	R	T	H	E	C	O	U	R	S	E
R	E	A	L	■	G	E	E	R	■	U	S	U	A	L
A	R	M	Y	■	Y	S	E	R	■	T	E	N	T	S

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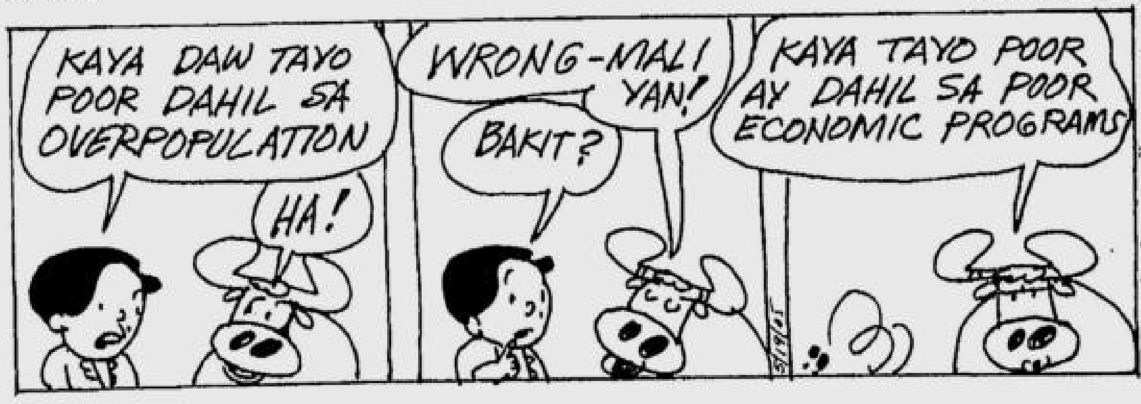
5/18/05

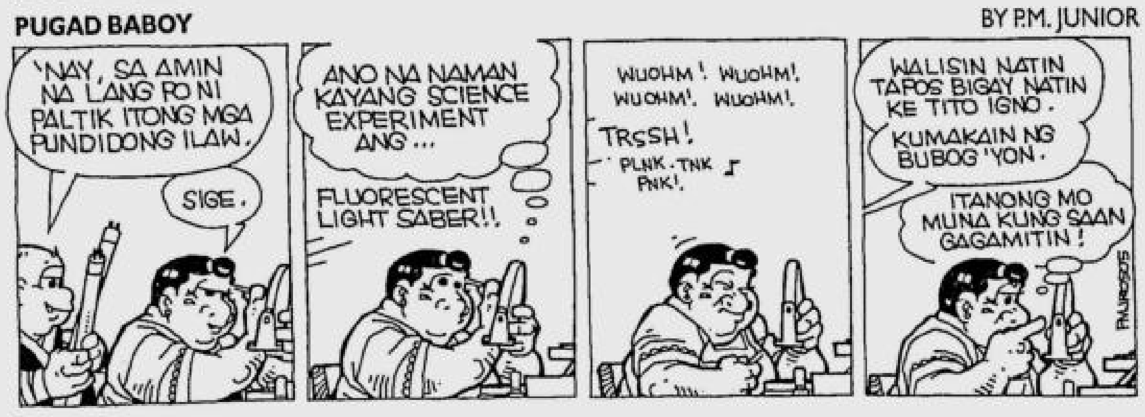
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


KAYA DAW TAYO POOR DAHIL SA OVERPOPULATION
HA!
WRONG-MALI YAN!
BAKIT?
KAYA TAYO POOR AY DAHIL SA POOR ECONOMIC PROGRAMS
5/19/05

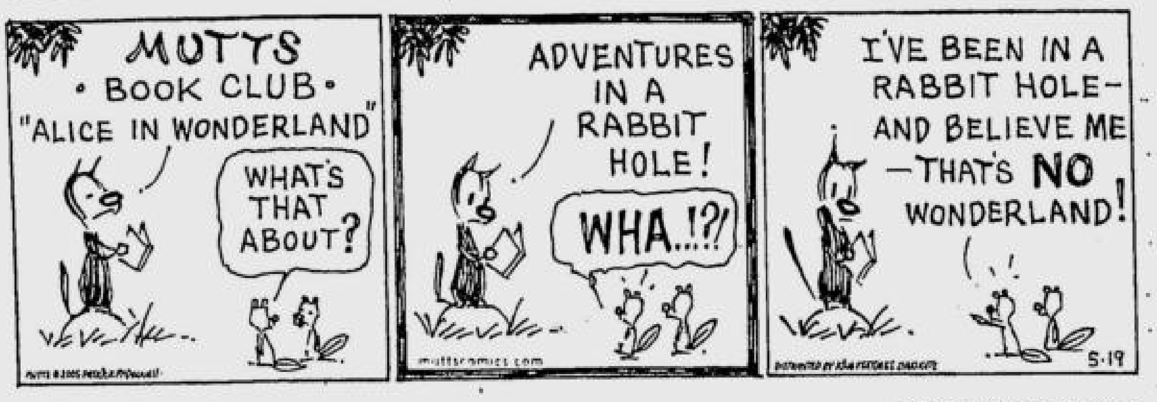
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


'NAY, SA AMIN NA LANG PO NI PALTIK ITONG MGA PUNDIDONG ILAW.
SIGE.
ANO NA NAMAN KAYANG SCIENCE EXPERIMENT ANG...
FLUORESCENT LIGHT SABER!!.
WUOHM! WUOHM! WUOHM! WUOHM!
TRSSH!
PLNK. TNK PNK!
WALISIN NATIN TAPOS BIGAY NATIN KE TITO IGNO.
KUMAKAIN NG BUBOG 'YON.
ITANONG MO MUNA KUNG SAAN GAGAMITIN!
PMJR05

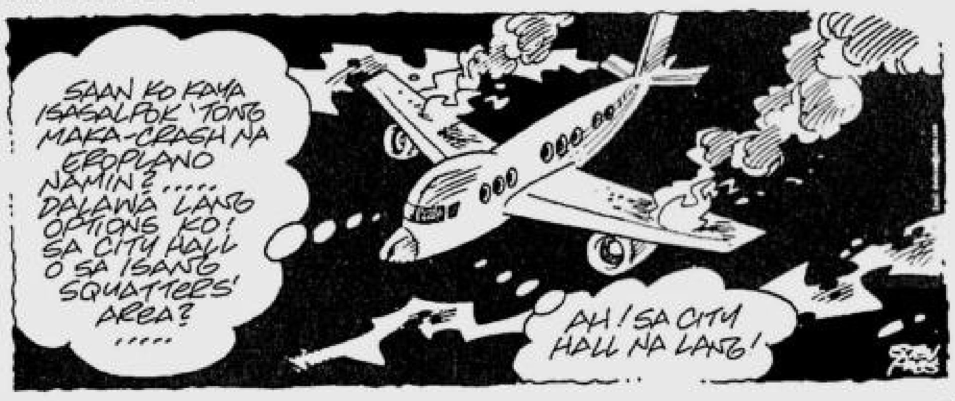
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MUTTS • BOOK CLUB • "ALICE IN WONDERLAND"
WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?
ADVENTURES IN A RABBIT HOLE!
WHA..!?!
I'VE BEEN IN A RABBIT HOLE— AND BELIEVE ME —THAT'S NO WONDERLAND!
muttscomics.com
5-19

DIVINE COMEDY

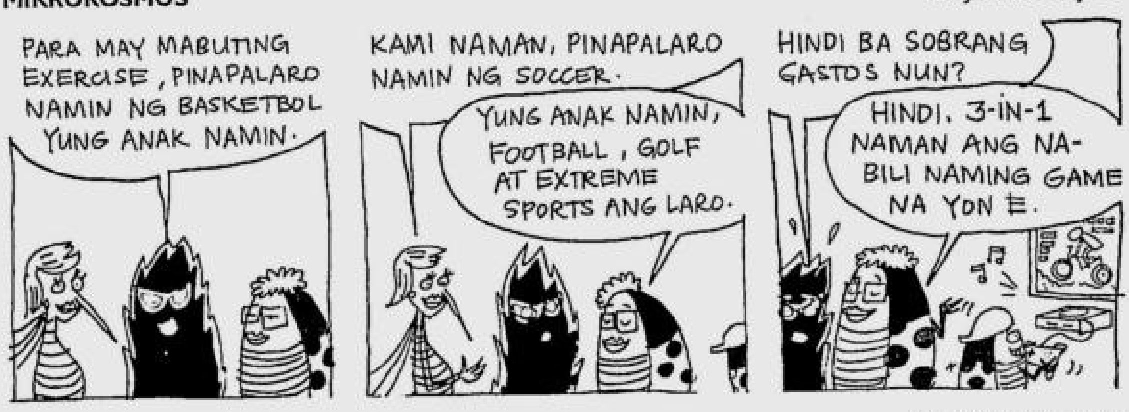
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SAAN KO KAYA ISASALPOK 'TONG MAKA-CRASH NA EROPLANO NAMIN?..... DALAWA LANG OPTIONS KO! SA CITY HALL O SA ISANG SQUATTERS' AREA? .....
AH! SA CITY HALL NA LANG!

SA MGA HULING SANDALI NG BUHAY NG PILOTONG SI GUIDO, NAKAGAWA PA RIN SYA NG ISANG KABUTIHAN KAYA SYA AY PINASOK NG DIYOS SA LANGIT

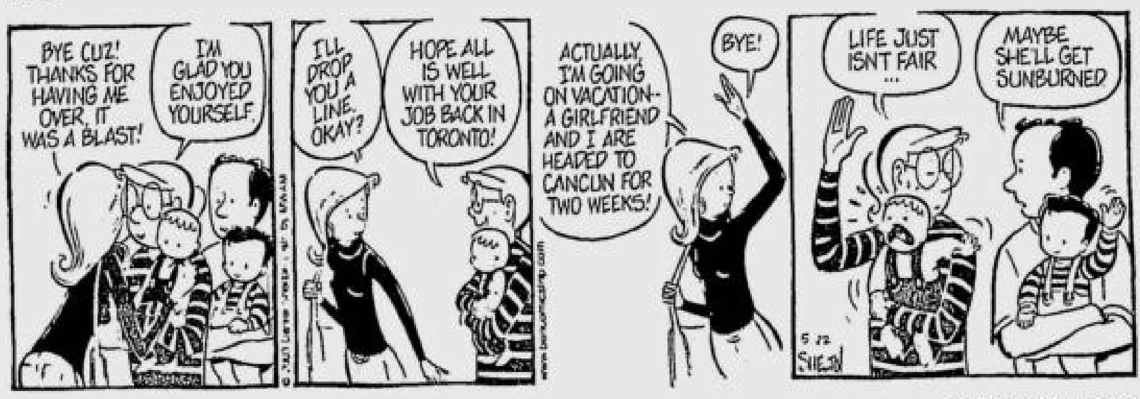
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PARA MAY MABUTING EXERCISE, PINAPALARO NAMIN NG BASKETBOL YUNG ANAK NAMIN.
KAMI NAMAN, PINAPALARO NAMIN NG SOCCER.
YUNG ANAK NAMIN, FOOTBALL, GOLF AT EXTREME SPORTS ANG LARO.
HINDI BA SOBRANG GASTOS NUN?
HINDI. 3-IN-1 NAMAN ANG NABILI NAMING GAME NA YON E.

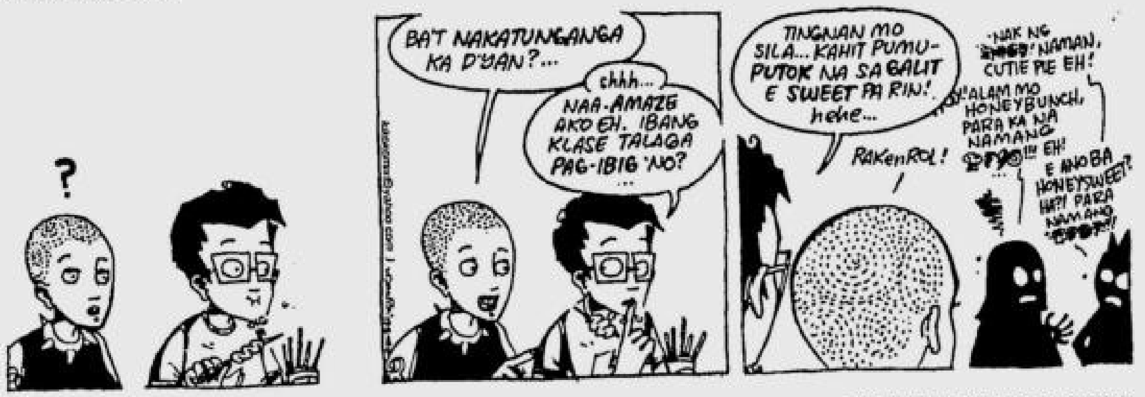
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


BYE CUZ! THANKS FOR HAVING ME OVER, IT WAS A BLAST!
I'M GLAD YOU ENJOYED YOURSELF.
I'LL DROP YOU A LINE, OKAY?
HOPE ALL IS WELL WITH YOUR JOB BACK IN TORONTO!
ACTUALLY, I'M GOING ON VACATION- A GIRLFRIEND AND I ARE HEADED TO CANCUN FOR TWO WEEKS!
BYE!
LIFE JUST ISN'T FAIR ...
MAYBE SHE'LL GET SUNBURNED
5-22

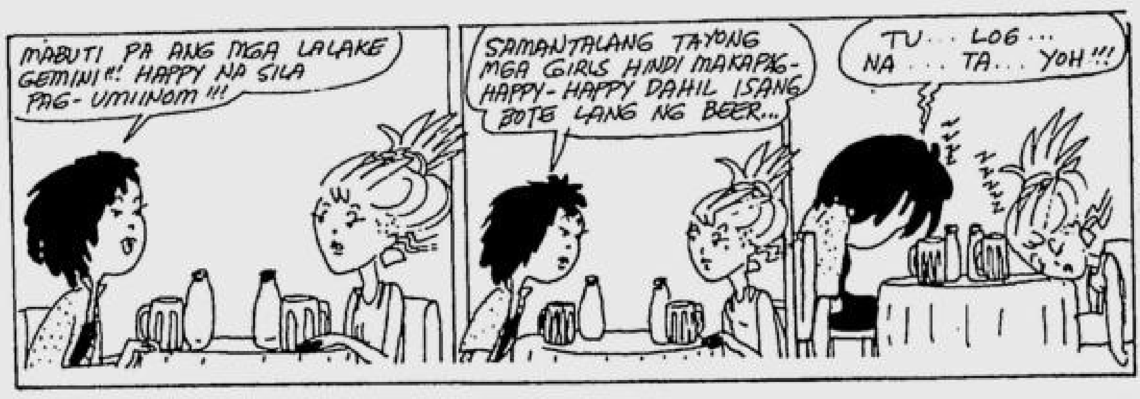
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


?
BA'T NAKATUNGANGA KA D'YAN?...
chhh... NAA-AMAZE AKO EH. IBANG KLASE TALAGA PAG-IBIG 'NO?
TINGNAN MO SILA... KAHIT PUMUPUTOK NA SA BALIT E SWEET PA RIN! hehe...
RAKenROL!
'NAK NG [illegible] NAMAN, CUTIE PIE EH!
ALAM MO HONEYBUNCH, PARA KA NA NAMANG [illegible]!! EH!
E ANO BA HONEYSWEET? HA?! PARA NAMANG [illegible]

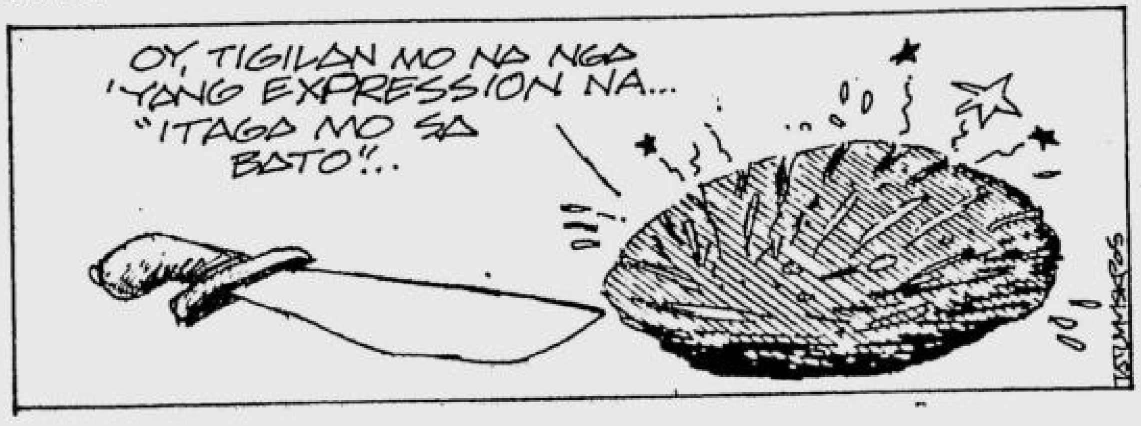
LOVEKNOTS

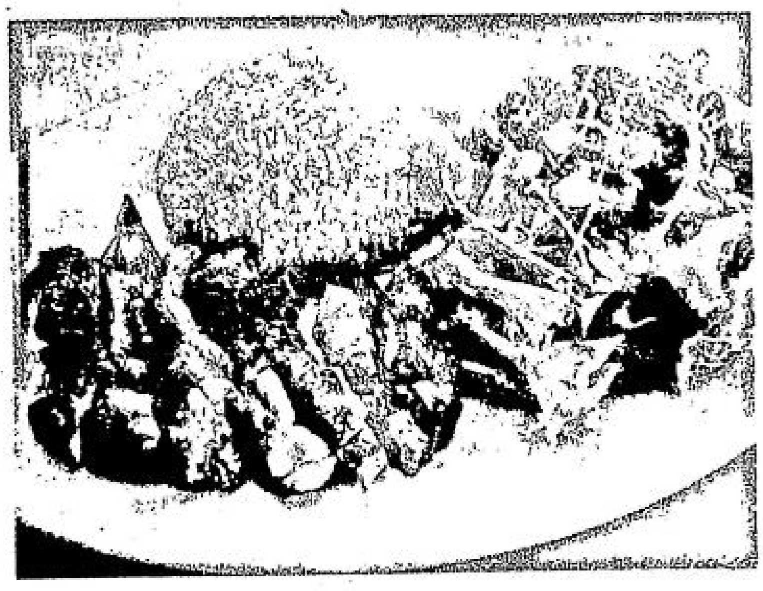
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MABUTI PA ANG MGA LALAKE GEMINI!! HAPPY NA SILA PAG-UMIINOM!!!
SAMANTALANG TAYONG MGA GIRLS HINDI MAKAPAG-HAPPY-HAPPY DAHIL ISANG BOTE LANG NG BEER...
TU... LOG... NA... TA... YOH!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

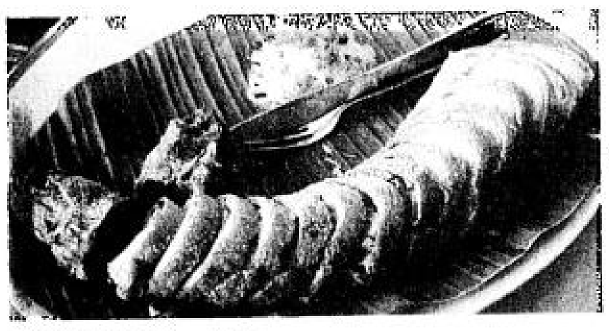

OY, TIGILAN MO NA NGA 'YANG EXPRESSION NA... "ITAGA MO SA BATO"!..



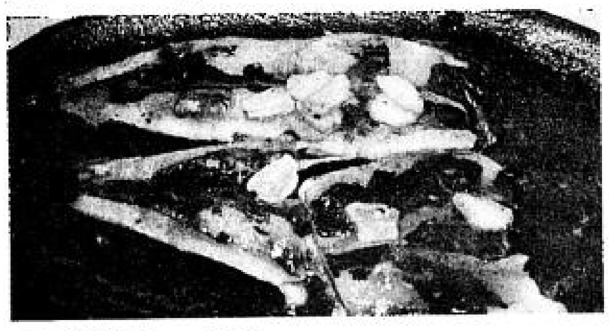
CHICKEN Barbecue Dinner with Java Rice and Veggies

BENTO Box Set 3, which includes Tempura, Veggies, Shiitake Mushrooms, Sashimi and Tofu, is served with Japanese Fried Rice.

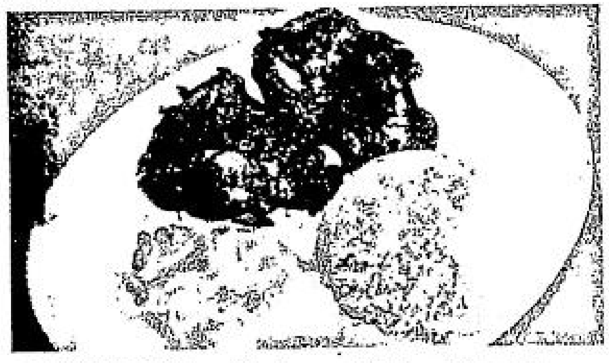
SALMON, Manok and Baboy, with Plain Rice and Veggies



BONELESS Crispy Pata



SIZZLING Bangus Belly



BONELESS Chicken Barbecue with Java Rice and Atchara

Alex the great

A 20-year-old staple in the resto industry reinvents itself

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Joseph Agcaoili

MANY restaurateurs believe their business is a tough nut to crack because of the dining places that have come and gone. In order to stay afloat in such a competitive environment, a resto owner should know how to respond to the needs of customers.

This is why Alex III Resto-Grille has reinvented itself despite being around for 20 years. "We've realized that we should respond to what our customers want and that we really have to make a drastic change. It's practically what the restaurant depends on, for it to move accordingly," says Norman Cruz, vice president for finance.

The change started with the name—from Alex III Restaurant to Alex III Resto-Grille. "The new name gives the restaurant a more casual and modern image. The colors, which have been changed from brown to green and yellow, look younger, more relaxed and definitely hip. This is our way of reaching out to the younger crowd," Cruz says.

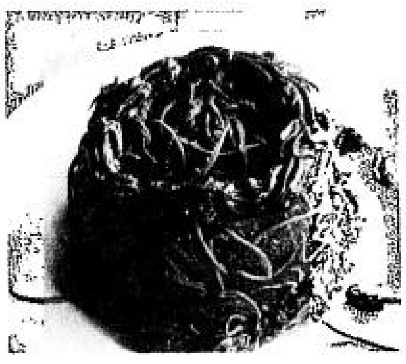
The hues of tables and chairs were also changed. "We did away with the table cloth, all in support of the new look. It's a classic style with a modern touch. It's like dining at home," Cruz says.

The response of customers to the restaurant's new look, Cruz says, has been enthusiastic. At the Tomas Morató and Wilson branches, for instance, most diners prefer to go upstairs for its al fresco ambiance. "It goes to show that people's dining perspectives have evolved."

Menu change

Alex III has been known for its home-style recipes and mixture of Japanese, Chinese and Filipino dishes. But the palate of customers, even the restaurant's habitués, Cruz says, is also changing. So the restaurant introduced charcoal-grilled fare, salads, pizza and cold coffee drinks in the menu to capture a bigger market.

"We're also eyeing small party groups or the 'instant party' crowd by coming up with our own instant party menu," Cruz says.



ALEX III Choco Cake

Alex's "Celebration Trays" include Deep-fried Stuffed Shrimps with Sweet Chili Sauce, Siomai with Garlic Chili Sauce and Special Sauce, Chicken Relleno, Sushi Party Platter, Callos, Pastel de Lengua, Lengua with Mushroom Gravy, Pork and Chicken Adobo, Hawaiian Ham Steak with Pineapple Raisin Sauce, Pollo Pastel, Seafood Laing, Sotanghon Guisado, Baked Macaroni, Baked Spaghetti, Lasagna, Chicken Potato Salad, Chicken Macaroni Salad, Fruity Potato Salad, Russian Salad, Spaghetti Salad and Tropical Fruit Salad with Grated Cheese.

Each tray, which is good for 12 persons, has to be ordered two days in advance.

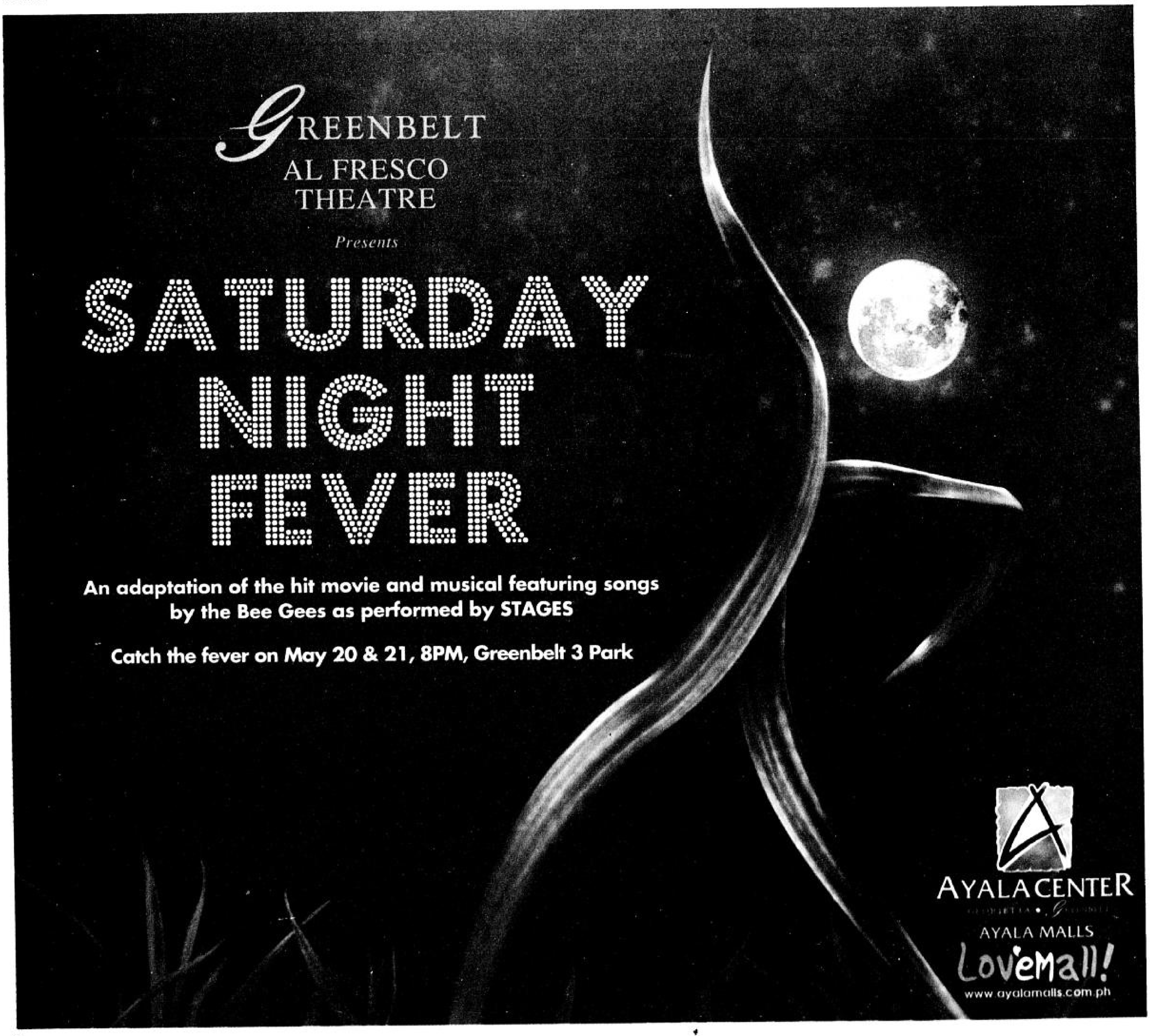
"Gift Treats," on the other hand, which include Chicken Pie Royale, Ensaimada Bites, Cheese Roll Bites, Cream Puff, Profiteroles, Mamon, Ensaimada, Cheese Roll and Banana Cupcake, have to be ordered a day in advance.

The prices of the Celebration Trays, Gift Treats and menu items are affordable, even lower than their original prices. Even the prices of Alex's delivery menu will be lowered soon.

Despite the competition, Cruz says they're confident. The key to success, he believes, is "doing things right." In this case, that means fair prices, serving generous delicious portions and providing quality service.

Open from 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and 5:30-11 p.m. daily, Alex III Resto-Grille is located at Wilson St., Greenhills (tels. 7240882/7247794/ 7264212/ 7266674); Tomas Morato, QC (9291616/ 9269673/ 3711414); and Matalino St., QC (9261266/ 9268942/ 9272597).

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph



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